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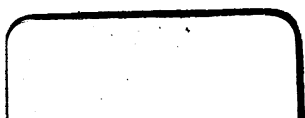
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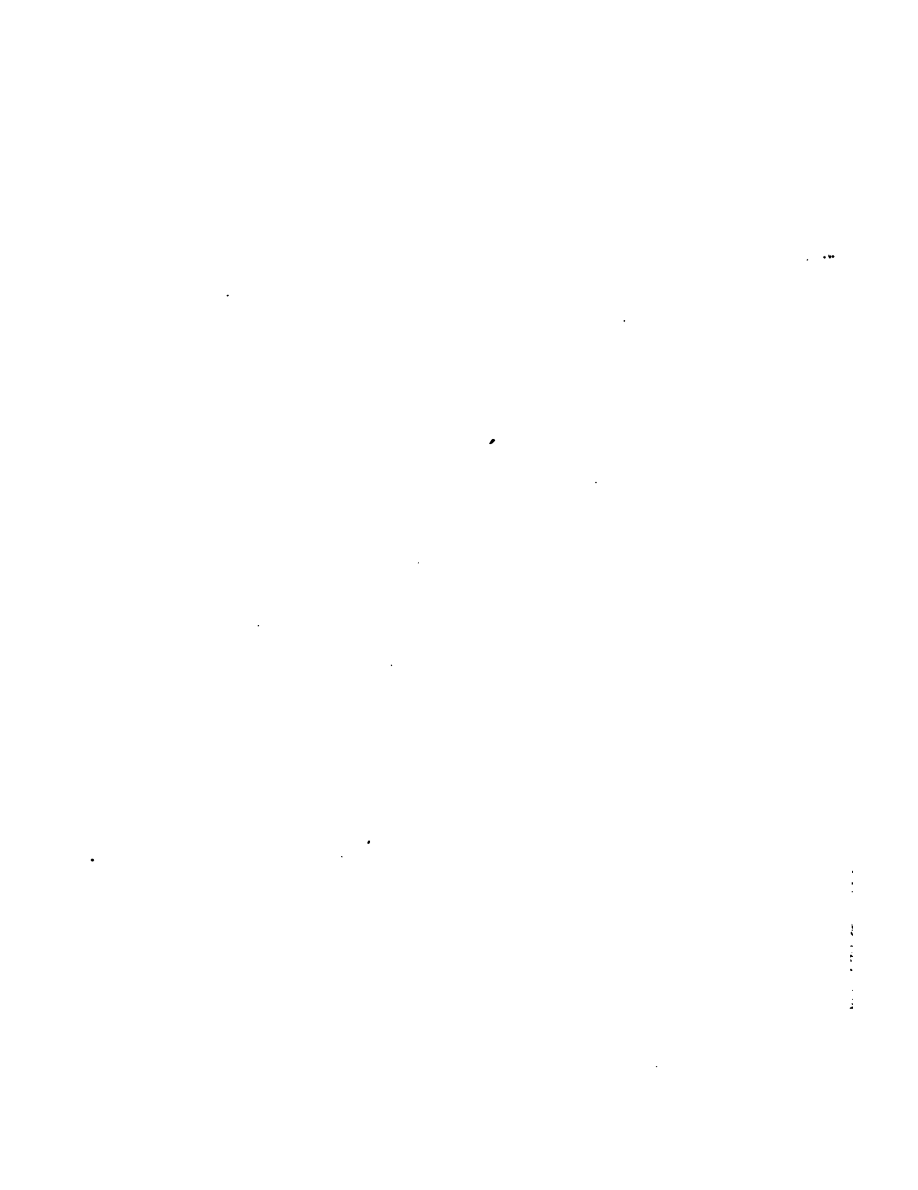
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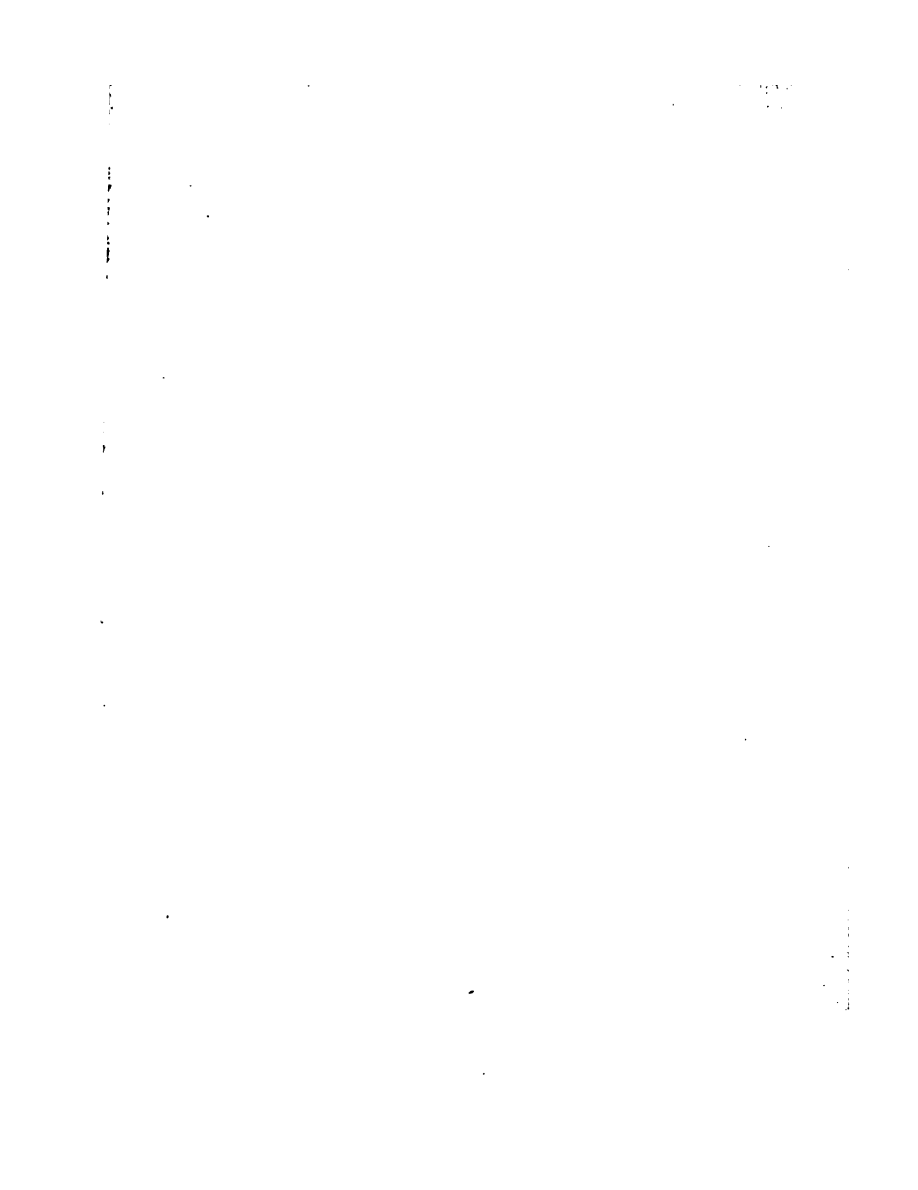
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THE COMPANERE.

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CHARLIE'S DISCOVERIES:

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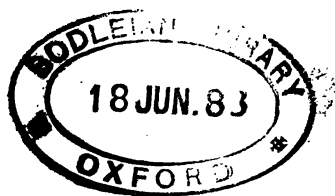
A GOOD USE FOR EYES AND EARS.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS,
ENGRAVED BY THOMAS WILLIAMS, AFTER
DESIGNS BY JOSEPH PITTMAN.

"Such be thy portion!—the bliss to look,
With a reverent spirit, through Nature's book:
By fount, by stream, by river's line,
To trace the paths of a love divine;
To read its deep meanings—to see and hear
God in earth's garden—and not to fear."

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1839.

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**CHARLIE RECEIVING HIS FIRST HINTS
"ON DISCOVERIES."**

CHARLIE'S DISCOVERIES.

CHAPTER I.

ON DISCOVERIES.

“WHY, dear Mamma, only look at Charlie, did you ever see him so serious before?” whispered little Elizabeth to Mrs. Graham, as she sat on a low stool at work. “I can guess what you are thinking about,” continued she; “of the nice ride you are to have with Papa this evening, or else of the tiresome dog, who spoilt your best rose-tree yesterday.”—“No, no, Bessie, you are quite wrong,” said he; “and you would not

guess it if you were to try ever so. I was wishing very much, Mamma, that I could discover something quite new. You have told me about Columbus, who discovered great America, and many other clever men who found out wonderful things; and, though I have lived almost nine years, I cannot remember having discovered anything at all."

"Oh, Charlie, Charlie!" said Elizabeth laughing, "do you wish to set off in a great ship, and sail about on the sea, in search of new lands or islands, or fly away in a balloon to look for the moon and stars?"—"Though you are more than eight years old, dear," said Mrs. Graham, "it is not too late to begin making discoveries; and I dare say, if you set about it in right earnest, you may find out something new every day."

“Oh, Mamma! what do you mean?” said Charles. “Why, my dear boy, there are hundreds of things, of which you have never thought or heard; many of which, I have no doubt, you may discover, by making good use of your eyes and ears.”—“But where must I look and listen for them?” asked Charles; “I do not know where to begin.”

“In the garden and the fields; by the brook and the sea-shore.”—“But can I indeed find out something that nobody ever knew before?”

“Why, I cannot promise you *that* exactly; but you can gain a great deal of knowledge yourself, and then you will be able to teach others; will not that be delightful? And I will tell you of a plan which I have just thought of; I will get a little book ready, nicely ruled and all, and

then, whenever you make a discovery, you can write down an account of it.”—“Oh, thanks, thanks, dear Mamma,” said Charles, clapping his hands; “and please print on the first page, ‘Charlie’s Discoveries;’ that will be a proper title, will it not?”

“Yes, dear, that will do nicely.”—“And to make it look like a regular book,” said Charles, “we must put ‘published by Mr. Graham,’ or something of that sort: and all the pages must be numbered, you know.”—“Very well, Charlie, I will follow your directions, and then I dare say it will be a clever affair.”—“Oh, what fun!” said Elizabeth, who had been silent for an unusual length of time; “to think of Charlie writing a book about his grand discoveries: I wonder how long he will have to use his eyes and

ears, before he finds out anything : it would not be of much use for me to try, I think.”—“ You are about right there, Bessie,” said her Mamma, “ unless a great improvement were to take place : do not forget the story of Eyes and No Eyes.”



CHAPTER II.

THE ROSE-LEAF CUTTER.

LITTLE Charles did not waste his time in bed on the following morning, so anxious was he

to obtain materials to insert in his book. "And now," said he to himself, as he stood in the rose-covered porch which led to the garden, "and now my eyes, which Papa says are so sharp, and my ears too, you must do me good service to-day, for I much need your assistance;" and away the little boy bounded along the winding path, and over the low wicket-gate at the bottom of the garden, into a narrow green lane, shaded by high banks and overhanging trees.

"Shall I go into the dingle?" thought he. "No, Mamma says it is too damp to walk there before breakfast, so I will go up the lane instead; and if I do not discover anything there, I can walk home through the corn-field."

So Charles sauntered along; now applying eye and ear to some deep hole in the bank; and now

scanning the wreaths of woodbine and clematis, which festooned his path. A most tempting resting-place soon presented itself, in the shape of an old stump of a tree, almost bowered over with dog-roses in full bloom; and Charlie did not fail to take possession of it. "Dear me!" said he, (for he was much in the habit of talking to himself,) "it is very warm this morning, but my wide straw hat makes a nice fan. Hark! what is that buzz, buzzing just in my ear? Oh, it is only a bee, pretty thing! I think it must be almost breakfast-time, at least I am very hungry. Stay, what is that little bee about? I never knew before that they ate leaves; I will watch it for a few minutes."

The industrious little insect had fixed herself on a leaf of the rose-tree, with its edge between her feet, and was cutting away with her mandibles

as quickly and far more neatly than Charlie could have done with a pair of scissors. "Oh, how curious ! how wonderful !" exclaimed he ; " why, she is cutting a little round piece quite out of the leaf : what can be the use of that ?"

As he finished speaking, the circular piece was almost detached from the leaf, and the bee poised her gauzy wings, that her weight might not tear it away too soon, and spoil her neat work.

Charles tried to follow her track as she flew away with the piece of leaf, but he soon lost sight of her in a labyrinth of bushes, and returned slowly to his seat, hoping she would shortly re-appear. In the mean time he minutely examined the leaves of the rose-trees, and found that the clever little insect had made use of several of them, but for what purpose he could not divine.

He did not wait long before he again heard the humming of his friend, and again saw her perform her curious operation with the utmost exactness. Charles having once more vainly tried to follow her rapid flight, bent his steps homeward, determined directly after breakfast to ask his Mamma for an explanation of the wonder he had seen.

Bessie's merry laugh hailed him from her chamber window as he approached the house. "Good day, Mr. Wisdom," said she; "pray, are you returning from your first voyage of discovery? Have you been examining the passage round the North Pole?"

"Let them laugh that win," answered Charles: "if I have done nothing more, I have found out the way to get a good appetite."

“And rosy cheeks,” said his Papa, patting his curly head; “and something better still, the habit of observation. But come down, you little lazy thing!” said he, looking up at Elizabeth; “the coffee and eggs are on the table, and all are ready but you.”

Charles could not talk to his Mamma on the subject uppermost in his mind, until they met in the school-room, as several post letters engaged her attention.

She had noticed the expressive face of her little boy; and as soon as she was at liberty, she called him to her side, saying, “You wish to speak to me, Charlie, dear, do you not?”—“Yes, Mamma; will you explain something very curious, which I have seen this morning. There was a little bee on some rose-trees in the lane, cutting

out small round pieces from the leaves with her sharp teeth, and then flying off with them ; but I could not see where she went or what she did with them. And oh ! Mamma, you should have seen how beautifully she did it, and how careful she was not to tear it with her weight, when she had nearly separated the piece.”—“ Well, Charlie, that was a pretty sight indeed, and one which I have never seen ; but if you would like to know, I can tell you to what use she applies the little rounds of rose-leaf.”—“ Oh ! yes, if you please, Mamma.”

“ The insect which interested you so much is a common bee, called the Rose-leaf Cutter, and one of the family of Upholsterer Bees, so named from the singular way in which they form and line their cells. They do not live in large

companies, like the inhabitants of a hive, but each makes a separate home in a place of her own choosing, in which to deposit her eggs; therefore they are called solitary bees.

“ The Rose-leaf Cutter makes a hole in a pathway, or in the cavities of a wall, or an old tree, from six to ten inches in depth; in this she builds her little cells, shaped like a thimble; the bottom of one fitting into the opening of the one beneath it; and so on until she arrives at the surface. Each apartment, or cell, is lined with cuttings of rose-leaf, (such as you saw her procuring,) neatly folded together, and fitted most exactly round the interior. It requires ten or twelve pieces to form *one* cell:



so you see, Charlie, what great patience and industry the pretty bee must possess, to construct her snug home with such nicety. When one cell is completed, her next care is to fill it with a store of honey, or pollen, which she mostly takes from the thistle, and is of a beautiful rose colour. In this she places a single egg, and covers the whole with three pieces of leaf, exactly round; which form the foundation for another thimble-shaped cell. If her work is ever accidentally interrupted, or her cells destroyed, she immediately sets about repairing the damage; and my little Elizabeth, and Charlie too, may learn from her example to persevere in their undertakings, and not to let any difficulty or slight obstruction turn them from their purpose."

"Please, Mamma," said Charles, "why does

the bee fill her cells with honey before she closes them up? it seems like taking a great deal of trouble in vain.”—“Not in vain, love, is her tender care for her young ones, which thus leads her to lay up a store of food to supply their wants, as soon as they feel them. By the time the young bee in the cell has consumed its nourishing food, it has acquired sufficient strength to escape from its confinement and roam at large, gathering sweets from every flower; and now, as my little history of the Rose-leaf Cutter is come to an end, you had better begin your regular lessons.”—“Thank you, dearest Mamma,” said Charles; “another time I will try to find out one of these pretty rose-leaf cells; but I will not hurt the little bee, or her curious work, for that would be very unkind.”

CHAPTER III.

A RAMBLE IN THE WOODS.

ON the next Saturday afternoon, which was the children's half holiday, Charles, with an interesting book of travels, ensconced himself in a thick, low bower, formed by luxuriant honeysuckles and roses, in a retired part of the garden. He had not long enjoyed his retreat, however, before Elizabeth, panting for breath, pushed aside the boughs, exclaiming as she threw herself on the seat: "Well, so I have found you at last; I have been hunting everywhere, from the



RETURN FROM THE WOODS.

drawing-room to the stable, and all over the garden ; but I only just thought of coming here, for you used not to like this place, which always swarms with insects.”—“ Really, Bessie dear,” interrupted Charles, “ what do you want me so particularly for ? I am just journeying across the Andes, with a party of gentlemen, and guides and mules :—But how hot you look ! almost as red as cook before a great fire.”—“ No wonder if I do,” said Bessie. “ But, dear Charlie, will you go with me to the ‘ hill-side woods,’ to gather harebells and lilies ?—you can show me where the best grow, for you know every stick and stone there almost. Mamma has given us leave ; and William is to carry the basket, and take care of us ; and little brother Harry may go too on the donkey.”—“ Oh, joy ! joy !” ex-

claimed Charles ; “ good-b’ye, Andes, and travellers, and all. Now, then, I am quite ready : but do not run, Bessie ; there is plenty of time, for Primrose has to be saddled.” — “ Oh ! but William had almost brushed him down when I came through the yard : you cannot think how pleased Harry is ; he could hardly stand still to be dressed, and he is chattering away so fast about his ‘ *dear Primrose*.’ ” — “ But what do you want so many harebells and lilies for, Bessie ? ” — “ Do you not remember how very fond little Lucy Berresford is of them ? and now you know she is so ill, and not able to gather them herself, I thought I would make some pretty garlands to send her.” — “ How very kind of you, dear,” said Charles, kissing her cheek ; “ I will help you to gather the largest and best.”

Mr. and Mrs. Graham stood in the porch to see the happy party off. Charles and Elizabeth, hand in hand, made a nice little pair; they were twins; and although dissimilar in their characters, were strikingly alike in person, except that Charlie's blue eyes and clear complexion, were of a darker tint than his sister's: they both wore the bright hue of health, and happiness beamed in each face. Little Harry, full of fun and frolic, patted the donkey's neck, and encouraged him in his prattling manner to proceed, telling the careful William there was no need to hold the bridle, as "Mamma said he was very gentle."

Having roamed through the lovely wood, William carrying Harry in his arms (as the paths were too intricate for the donkey), and filled a

large basket with woodland beauties, Charles proposed that they should sit down by a running brook to rest, and cool. And, indeed, the poor child needed it; for he had taken more exertion than any of the party, having scrambled up many a bank, for wreaths of woodbine for Bessie's bonnet, and run hither and thither in search of some curiosity for Harry, whose hands were full of treasures. Nor did he forget amidst it all, that his little book of discoveries stood in need of some additions.

“How refreshing a draught of this cool water would be!” said he, plunging his hands into the stream; “but I know I must not drink of it yet; I am too hot. Come, Bessie, here is a mossy seat for you; you look like a little queen with that crown of flowers.” Charles threw him-



THE WATERFALL.

self down with his face almost close to the water's edge, and began turning over the small pebbles, and shells, which bordered the shallow stream. "Why, what can this be?" said he, picking up a little oblong group of the most tiny shells, chiefly fresh-water muscles and snails; "a piece of mud or something soft, I suppose, to which they have stuck." He held it up to show to his companions, but perceived them wandering farther up the stream, in search of more beauties, so he resumed his examination. "Why, it is moving! one end of it at least. Now I see! that must be the head of an insect, and this pretty little grotto is its house. Well! this is more wonderful than the bee's rose-leaf cell: if it would not hurt the little thing, I should like to pull it out of its case, and see what sort of a crea-

ture it is ; but it would be too cruel. How I wish I could find a hollow stone, or shell, that would hold water, and then I could take it home for Mamma to see. Here, William, William ! will you help me to find what I want ?”

William good-humouredly set to work, while Charles took charge of his brother, and pursued his search for wonders at the same time. “Finger, poor finger,” said the little boy, beginning to cry. “What’s the matter, dear ?” asked Charles, taking his extended hand, and examining it ; “oh ! I see, here is an ugly thorn ;—there, it is out now ; don’t cry any more. Look here at this pretty thing !” said he, drawing a bough of oak towards him, and gathering a cluster of what are termed oak-apples. “Harry must not put

them to his mouth; no, dear, only look. Now let's come and find William."

William was close to them with the remains of a glass bottle in his hand; "Will this do, Master Charles?" said he; "I can find nothing better; it will hold a little water."—"Capital! thank you, William," said Charles, depositing his treasure therein. "And now," added William, "we must set off home, or you will be after tea-time."

It was with some reluctance that they quitted the cool freshness of the woods for the dusty lane; but, as Harry did not take up much room on the donkey, William placed Bessie safely behind him, and held an umbrella over them to keep off the heat of the afternoon sun.

As Charles strolled along by himself, he began to meditate on the oak-apples, which were still in his hand. "It is strange," thought he, "that the oak should bear two kinds of fruit, the acorn, and this round, red, and yellow apple, which they say is poisonous: I wonder what it is like inside?" Having borrowed a pocket-knife of William, he cut it open; when, imagine his astonishment, on discovering in the midst of the fleshy, fruit-like substance, a number of little oval cells, each containing a grub!

"And have I indeed found out the home which another insect prepares for her young! but I can never tell how she forms this. Oh! how great and wise must the good God be, who teaches such little creatures to provide themselves shelter, and food, in so many wonderful ways!"

.

With thoughts like these, Charlie's love and admiration of the All-wise Creator seemed to expand ; and he might be said to look from Nature up to Nature's God.

The road home no longer seemed tedious, nor did he feel the sun's rays oppressive, so occupied were his thoughts on the most interesting of all subjects ; and it was not until his Papa's kind voice welcomed them home, that he roused from his reverie.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CADDIS-WORM, AND THE OAK-APPLES.

IMMEDIATELY on his liberation from the tea-table, Charles hastened to provide better accommodation for his captive in the grotto ; and then brought it to his Mamma, requesting an account of its name, and history.

“ Wonders on wonders ! Charlie,” said Mr. Graham ; “ I think Mamma will become a famous story-teller, if you give her so much practice.”

“ This ingenious little insect, my dear boy,”

began Mrs. Graham, "is commonly called the Caddis-worm. Does it not remind you very much of a hermit, living all alone in this manner? If you examine the head and shoulders, (which are frequently protruded in search of food,) you will see that they are hard, and rather horny; while the other part of the body, which is protected from danger, is soft, like a caterpillar. The construction of its case is most remarkable; for although it is composed of stones, and shells, of different shapes, and sizes, yet they are so carefully joined, that the interior is perfectly smooth;



as is also the under side of the case, in order that the inhabitant may drag it easily along the bot-

tom of the brook where it lives ; which, you know, would be very difficult if any angles, or rough points, were in the way. I do not wonder that you are astonished, Charlie, to see and hear of the ingenuity of these little insignificant worms ; but the meaner the instrument appears, the more praises are due to Him, who has endowed even the smallest works of His hand with such marvellous instinct."

"Does the Caddis-worm always build with shells and stones, Mamma ?"

"No, my dear ; one uses pieces of reed-straw, or wood, cut to the proper length, and carefully joined and cemented together ; frequently finishing the whole, by adding a piece longer than the rest, to serve as a shelter for his head, that he may be more secure from observation."



“How droll,” said Charles. “Then he can pop his head out, and eat, and look about him, and nobody be any the wiser; I should like to have a peep at the cunning fellow. But do tell me more about their different ways of building, please, Mamma.”

“There is another Caddis-worm, which bestows much labour on his domicile: he weaves together the leaves of an aquatic plant into an oval ball; and in the centre of this forms his cell.



Some make use of sand, adding a good-sized stone as ballast, to prevent them from being carried away by the current; and again, others, if they find their grottoes too heavy, attach thereto a piece of straw, or light wood, to give them the proper buoyancy."

"I am sure I should be a long while thinking of such nice contrivances," said Charles. "Instinct is all the guide they possess, you know," said Mrs. Graham: "but the superior faculty of reason has been mercifully bestowed upon you; and if you exercise this aright, you will find it quite sufficient. Well, I think we have almost done with the little Caddis-worm now: is there anything else you wish to hear about?"

"Oh! yes, Mamma; these pretty oak-apples. I found out, as we were coming home, that they

are not real fruit, but the nest of insects. Will you please tell me how these little grubs came to be inside ; I can see no holes at all."

"I fear I cannot tell you anything very interesting about the oak-apples ; nevertheless, they are extremely curious, as exhibiting another variety of insect formations. But little has as yet been learned respecting the Gall-flies, whose nests are so common on the oak, poplar, willow, and rose-trees. Some produce a little round berry on the leaf, about the size of a currant ; others form woolly tufts round the stem of rose and hawthorn trees ; and others, again, these curious oak-ap-



ples which you have brought me, I believe these are formed by the puncture, or bite, of the Gall-fly in the young buds, in order to make a hole for the reception of her eggs. This work of the insect changes the regular course of the sap, or the nourishing fluid, which flows through every part of the tree, and which, in its efforts to cover the hole, produces this round apple, about the size of a wall-nut. When the little eggs, which are so safely encased, come to life, they feed on the substance which served them for a home. In a short time they sink into their winter sleep, and, in the following summer, are changed into perfect Gall-flies. Can you tell me, Charlie, to what useful purpose the gall-nuts are applied?"

"No, dear Mamma."

"A vast many of them are employed in the

manufacture of ink, together with copperas, gum-arabic, and water."

"Copperas! Mamma, what is that?"—"It is a mineral salt, of a bright green colour, produced by exposing copper to the moisture of the atmosphere, or air. I think I need not tell you what gum-arabic is."—"No, Mamma; it is found on the bark of trees, in Egypt and Arabia."—"Yes, dear, it is the sap which oozes from the tree, in the same manner as you have noticed on the plum and cherry; only the gum from abroad is of a much finer sort. But my little boy looks tired, so we will not talk more now."—"Thank you, Mamma, I am only tired with my walk, and not of listening to you."

CHAPTER V.

THE MOSS-BUILDING CATERPILLAR.

ON a gentle rising ground, not far from Mr. Graham's residence, was situated the rustic village church, of which he was the minister. It formed a pretty object, with its low antique tower, the favourite haunt of rooks and jackdaws, almost hid in its mantle of ivy; whose luxuriant wreaths also hung in dark masses over the narrow pointed windows.

On the south side, a long avenue of yew and cedars, led to a low, arched portico; beneath



DEATH'S-HEAD MOTH AND CATERPILLAR.

whose shade the old men and women from the village, loved to sit in the cool of the day, recounting tales of their early life.

The trim, neatly-kept church-yard was covered with many a grassy mound, or humble stone, recording the name and virtues of those who slept beneath; while the evergreens and flowering shrubs, so tastefully arranged around it, gave an air of calm cheerfulness to this resting-place of the dead.

It was the Sabbath morning: Charles and Elizabeth, with Testament and Hymn Book, sought, as was their wont, the quiet spot. They entered by a private gate from the garden; and bending their steps to a sheltered part of the church-yard, sat down by a little narrow mound. It seemed as though much care had been spent

36 THE MOSS-BUILDING CATERPILLAR.

on this particular spot; small roses, harebells, and the lily of the valley, were blooming in beauty over it; and a few paces from the head of the grave stood a young almond-tree, whose lovely blossoms had now given place to verdure.

“Now, Charles, do you read first,” said Elizabeth.—“Shall I read about Lazarus?” asked he. “No, not that,” said Elizabeth; “it always makes me cry when I sit by little Mary’s grave.”

So Charles turned to another part, and he and his sister read by turns; and then they sang several hymns, finishing by the following simple lines which their Mamma had written expressly for them.

DIRGE FOR LITTLE MARY.

Sweet Mary ! we have loved thee well !

Our sister young and fair !

But now, where holy angels dwell,

Thou breathest heavenly air.

We heard thy faint and fluttering breath,

Tell of the Saviour's love ;

Thy blue eyes meekly closed in death,

To ope in joy above.

And now we miss thy cherub face ;

We miss thy mirthful glee ;

And vacant is thy much-loved place,

Beside our Mother's knee.

Thy voice no longer joins with ours,

Our holy hymns to sing :

No more with us thou tends't the flowers—

Bright flowers of the spring !

38 THE MOSS-BUILDING CATERPILLAR.

But o'er thy grave we've planted them,
Small roses, pale and fair ;
And harebells on their slender stem,
Are drooping lowly there.

The spotless robe thou wearest now,
Finds there an emblem meet ;
For lilies from their bells of snow
Are shedding fragrance sweet.

But in the Saviour's own parterre
Thou bloomest brightly now ;
Sickness nor pain can touch thee there,
Nor sorrow cloud thy brow.

And though on earth *we're* staying,
From *thee* so very far,
Yet there is joy in saying,
One family we are !

And though thy soul has entered
On the holy world unseen,

Our love in thee is centered,—

Death cannot come between.

Adieu, then ! sweetest Mary !

For we have loved thee well :

Thy image in our memory

Doth brightly, brightly dwell.

When these little duties were gone through, Charlie found by the old clock that they had still half an hour to spare ; so he asked Elizabeth to accompany him to the other side of the church-yard, to spell over, for the twentieth time, some old, half-obliterated epitaphs, which seemed, in his eyes, to possess great attractions, perhaps on account of their antiquated style.

Charles knelt down before the low stone, and traced the characters with his finger ; it chanced that one letter, which he particularly wished

to decipher, was quite hidden beneath a little clump of moss; he began tearing it off, but stopped suddenly, with an exclamation of wonder, not unmixed with sorrow, leaving a small piece hanging loose from the rest.

“What is the matter?” cried Elizabeth; “what have you done?”—“Oh! I am so vexed,” said Charles; “I have destroyed the pretty work of an insect—a caterpillar, I believe. I am sure, poor thing, I did not know that this little mossy hut was your property, or I would not have pulled it so roughly. See! Bessie, how disturbed the creature is; how he turns and twists about his soft body.”

“He does not know what to make of the sudden bursting open of his house,” said she; “I dare say the noise you made quite stunned

him.”—“No, if he were stunned he would lie quite still and insensible—I think they call it.”—“What a smooth caterpillar he is,” said Elizabeth: “and such a bluish colour, not like any others I have seen.”

“Let us watch him for a few minutes,” said Charles. “Mamma told us how persevering some insects are, that as soon as their work is destroyed, they will set about repairing it; perhaps we can see this little fellow begin.”—“It is a hopeless job, I think,” said Elizabeth; “such a large rent as you have made!”

“Do not despair too soon, Bessie; he seems already to be looking about him; getting his senses together, as nurse says: and now he is making his way to those tiny pieces of moss and lichen; I dare say he will patch his roof with them.”

42 THE MOSS-BUILDING CATERPILLAR.

“ Oh ! Charlie, how very tiresome ! here is William come to say, we must go in, and get ready for church, for it is late.”

“ Well, never mind, dear, we can come and look at the caterpillar again in the afternoon ; I think he will not have finished his work before then. Now let us try and forget him for the present.”

The children had portions of Scripture Catechism given them to commit to memory, between dinner and afternoon service ; and, in warm weather, they generally repaired to some shady nook in the garden, where they were free from interruption. On the present occasion, Charles said to his sister, “ Let us be diligent, and learn our lesson quickly, and then we can run, and just take a little peep at our moss-building Caterpillar.” —“ Oh, yes,” said Elizabeth ; “ I wonder how

he has been getting on : let us be as industrious as he is."

When even young children begin with a real determination to accomplish their object, they can generally succeed ; and so it was with our little hero and heroine.

The page and a half was thoroughly learned and understood ; and away they tripped to the time-worn tombstone.

" Ah !" said Charles, " he has not been waiting for us, I see ; it is all filled up but a very little bit."—" I can hardly tell the new from the old !" said Bessie, rather disappointed that the caterpillar had been so expeditious ; " I wanted to have seen him carrying fresh pieces of moss to his hut, and joining them to it !"

" Well, you will see him do that yet," said

44 THE MOSS-BUILDING CATERPILLAR.

Charles ; “ he is going back for the last piece. There ! did you notice how he tore off that little bit ?—and now he is cutting it with his teeth to the right shape.”

“ Now, then, caterpillar !” said Elizabeth, “ crawl away with your precious burden ; but allow me to help you on faster.”

“ No, no,” said Charles, pulling away her hand, “ you will only hinder and frighten him ; pray leave him alone. Now the piece is properly fixed, with its root inwards, and the yellow velvety part outside, there is but just room for Mr. Builder to creep in. There, he is making it quite secure with fine threads of silk, which he can spin whenever he likes.”

“ Well !” said Elizabeth, “ who would have thought that that little tuft of moss was any-

thing uncommon ! it looks just as I have seen it growing on old walls.”—“ Only more round and high,” added Charles : “ but if it had not been for my accident, I should not have suspected that any living creature was within it.”

“ And now, Charlie, you will have plenty to write in your little book to-morrow.”

“ Yes, indeed ; all about the Caddis-worm, and the Oak-apple, and this Caterpillar in his mossy hut.”



CHAPTER VI.

THE STAR-FISH, AND THE PINNA.

“Do not give your little scholars many lessons, or keep them long in school, this lovely morning,” said Mr. Graham in a loud whisper to his wife; “I think I have a treat in store for them.”—“Oh, Papa!” said Charles, laughing, “you should not talk secrets so loud!”—“And I could not help hearing it all,” said Elizabeth.

“Well,” said Papa, “I hope it will not do much harm. I think Mamma is going to tell some little folks, that it will depend on them-

selves, whether they are liberated pretty soon or not : have I not read your thoughts aright ?"—
“ Yes, you have indeed ; and now let us not waste any time in talking. Get your books and slates, my dears.”

How brightly the sun shone, and how gay all nature looked, when Charles and his sister ran down the garden after their Papa, to tell him their tasks were finished, and to question him concerning the coming pleasure, of which even Mamma was quite ignorant.

But Papa led them back to the dining-room, where a substantial luncheon was prepared : Mamma soon joined them, not a little amused at the secrecy which was going on, and, to tell the truth, partaking of the children’s curiosity.

“ It is very strange,” said Elizabeth to her

brother; "but Papa is so funny sometimes, I suppose he is going to take us by surprise."—"I guess we are going on some excursion," said Charlie; "else why should we have such a lunch, with sandwiches and all the rest."—"I wish I knew what it was;" said Elizabeth, sighing, she could not tell why. Mr. and Mrs. Graham now exchanged a few words; Charlie was despatched to the nursery, to be washed and made neat, and Elizabeth accompanied her Mamma.

They presently met again in the hall; and Charles, hearing the grating of wheels on the gravel, flew to open the door. His delight knew no bounds on seeing a nice double-seated chaise drawn up, and, apparently, waiting for *them*. "Let's ask William where we are going," said

Elizabeth, seeing him at the horse's head. "No, no," said Charles, "we had better not; and here come Papa and Mamma."

The chaise was soon occupied; Papa and Mamma in front, and the children comfortably seated behind. "Are our friends coming?" said Mr. Graham, standing up and looking down the road toward the village.

"I can see a chaise coming, Papa," said Charles. "You are right; they will soon overtake us."—"Do you know *now* where we are going?" said Mrs. Graham, looking round: "to a beautiful part of the sea-coast, about eight miles from hence; and our friends from the Manor-house are of the party."—"The sea! the sea!" cried both the children; "nothing could be pleasanter!"

They rode along the beautiful winding lanes in high spirits; now delighted with a bold view of the wide-spread ocean, which burst on their sight from the brow of a hill; now descending into a luxuriant valley, whose fruitful fields and thick foliage were sheltered from the fierce winds, which sometimes laid bare the higher grounds.

Quick-sighted Charlie discovered many interesting objects among the woods, which in some places skirt-



ed the road. There was a pretty brown squirrel, so nimble that it was seldom a second glance could be obtained of him; and many wood pigeons glancing through the shade, with their delicate plumage. Even Elizabeth was sometimes the first to point out a pheasant or partridge, escaping at the sound of their wheels.

As they approached their journey's end, the road became more tortuous, and descended into what might almost be called a rocky defile, whose uneven sides were furrowed by many small water-courses, which, joining their now tiny streams into one, rushed over crag and stone into the ocean. A few oaks and Scotch fir, looking as though they had felt many a wild storm, here and there cast their dark shadows across the road.

The children, almost awe-struck, seemed to have lost the use of their tongues ; except when an occasional “ Oh, dear ! ” or, “ I never ! ” broke from them, as they slowly descended lower and lower.

But when they rounded the last point, and found themselves on the sea-shore, all fear, real or imaginary, was forgotten ; and great was their haste to be quit of the chaise. “ Oh ! the beautiful, beautiful waves ! ” was Charlie’s first exclamation, as he watched them one after another majestically rolling in. When his first joy at again beholding them was a little subsided, he and Bessie began looking around them for shells, sea-weed, and other valuables. “ Look ! Bessie ! ” said he, “ do you not see something curious heaving about on the water ? ” — “ No, Charlie ;

what is it like?"—"I cannot tell exactly, but the colour is light reddish brown; I must try and get it; will you lend me your little parasol? I will not wet the silk. Now, here it comes; capital! is it not a pretty star-shaped thing?"—"Very pretty; but how cold and fleshy!" said Elizabeth, drawing away her hand from touching it. "Where is Mamma? I will go and ask her what it is!" said Charles, running off with it.



"It is a Star-fish!" said she; "a curious

thing, though very common. You would be puzzled to guess where its mouth is situated ; it is in the hole in the centre of these five rays, and is armed with sharp teeth, for the purpose of crushing the shells of smaller fishes, which it seizes for food. Each of these rays is furnished with a great number of *tentacula*, or feelers, in some amounting to several hundreds. These may be put out or withdrawn at pleasure, like the feelers of snails. By a waving motion of the rays, the Starfish is enabled to swim ; but its progress is slow. One thing is very curious : if by accident a ray is broken off, another can shortly be produced in its stead.—Now, Charlie, run and put this poor thing in its native element ; I dare say you may find plenty of dry specimens above high-water

mark. Yes, here comes Bessie with her hand full of them."

"Now, away! away!" cried Charles, "in search of something new; let us go to those tempting rocks, over which the spray dashes in such white clouds; we shall find sea-weed in abundance there: but we cannot get along very fast over this shingly beach."—"Quite fast enough," said Elizabeth; "I should be very hot if it were not for this beautiful breeze."

"Can you manage to climb up here?" said Charles; "give me your hand, and I will help you,"—"Do not go much farther, dear brother; it is so slippery, I am afraid of falling. Oh! do come back, and look at these beautiful little crabs crawling about in this shallow pool."

“I can’t come just now, dear,” shouted Charles, “for I have found the greatest curiosity: try and get to me, if you can.”

“Indeed it is quite impossible; I can neither move one way nor another.”

“My poor child,” said Mr. Graham, just then coming up, “you seem quite in a predicament; but I will soon rescue you from your slippery position.” With a few jumps from rock to rock, he reached the little girl, and carried her safely to the dry beach. “Now, run to your Mamma, while I go and see that Charlie does not get into mischief.—Why, my dear boy! what are you doing there?”

“Oh, Papa, I am so glad you are come to see my treasure!—a curious shell which I found

fastened with silky threads to the rock ; and just withinside is a small crab."

"That is a Pinna ; and a very good one, too, for a British species. The shell is in two parts, or *valves* ; therefore it is called *bivalve*. Let us take it home with us, it will find a place in your little cabinet. These fine threads, with which it attaches itself to the rocks, are the *byssus*, or beard ; and in Italy they are sometimes manufactured into gloves and other articles. Concerning this little crab, I do not know whether he



accidentally crept within this singular abode, or whether it makes good the story of an ancient author, who says, that the Pinna is accompanied by a crab, who lives with him in his shell; and shows his gratitude for the protection afforded him, by gently pinching his friend, when a fish comes within reach. The Pinna opens his doors, and encloses his prey, allowing the crab a proper share."

"Well, really, Papa, that is very amusing, for one pair of eyes to serve them both."

"Very accommodating indeed. But something seems going on in the way of provisions yonder; let us go and see."

Scarcely was their repast finished, when a large commodious boat was descried rounding the headland of the bay. As it neared the place where

the party were assembled, its white sails were reefed, and its head turned landwards.

“Well, my little lady,” said Mr. Alan, taking Elizabeth’s hand; “how shall you like a blow on this beautiful sea?”—“Very much, thank you, if I am not sick.”

“Oh! I hope that catastrophe will happen to none of us, it would spoil our pleasure; we must all keep the thoughts of it at a distance.”—“Papa,” said Charles, “will they not run the boat aground?”—“They are guiding her into the creek, my dear, where we can step aboard easily, and without being drenched with spray.”—“May I run and see them get her in?”—“If you will not get in the way.”—“Or into any danger,” added Mamma. “No, I will take care not to do that.”—“And now,” said Mr. Alan,

“perhaps we may as well follow our pioneer.”—
“I believe we are all willing,” said Mrs. Graham. “Come, Bessie, I dare say Papa will carry your basket ; it seems tolerably heavy.”

What is more pleasant or invigorating than to cut through the blue waves before a fresh breeze ; to look down into the clear depth beneath you, and up at the ever-varying clouds, swiftly careering along ; to follow with your eye the giddy flight of the sea-gull ; now dipping his white wing in the wave, and now wheeling rapidly away to his cliff-built home, or wherever his fancy may lead him.

With feelings like these but little conversation passed among our voyagers. There is such a thing as being too happy to talk ; and this was precisely Charlie’s case for the first hour ; when,

as the novelty wore off, he began to look forward with curiosity to the place of their destination.

It was to a wild and rugged part of the coast they were going ; intending to visit some rather remarkable caverns, one of which was of considerable extent, and lighted up at the extremity by a narrow fissure in the roof, the effect of which was very curious.

It required the exercise of all the helmsman's skill, to guide their vessel in safety between the sunken rocks, which were very numerous ; but it was effected, and they landed without accident on the bleak-looking shore.

Mr. Graham thought it more prudent for his children to remain on the shore, under the care of the boatmen, than inhale the damp air of the caverns ; but he yielded to their entreaties, to be

allowed to explore *only one*. They then returned quite satisfied, preferring the light of day to their oppressive gloom. "Does it not look as if these great masses of cliff would fall upon us, Bessie?" said Charles. "Yes, it is very frightful; I do not like to go close. I shall sit a good way off, and see how soon the sea covers this rock." But Charles was not inclined to be inactive; he scrambled from one projecting piece to another, and then sat down to admire the prospect, which, however, consisted chiefly of cliffs, sky, and sea. "The cliffs which I saw last summer," thought he, "were white and chalky, very different from this hard grey stone; but I like this the best, it looks so much grander. Here is a piece rather loose; if I can break it off, and roll it down, how frightened

Bessie will be ; and it cannot hurt her." With a great effort he detached the piece, and sent it bounding from crag to crag, the high cliffs around prolonging the sound by their echo. " Oh ! Charles ! " almost screamed Elizabeth ; " how could you do so ! I thought you were falling. Come down ! I am sure Mamma would not like to see you there."

" I am coming in a minute ; " but a singular appearance caught his eye, and he stayed to examine it. In the crag, from which the piece had been broken, he observed many curious impressions, as of serpent-like shells, coiled closely up. " I cannot understand this," said he ; " but if I get the piece I threw down, I shall surely find the shells themselves ; for these marks are only the *impression*, as Papa calls the

stamp of a seal." Charles groped about some time before finding the object of his search; when he had succeeded, he begged one of the boatmen to carry it to the beach, where he could survey it better. "Here they are, sure enough! six pretty shells fixed in the hard stone!"—"Shells," said Elizabeth, "could never have come there; they must be part of the rock itself."

"We will ask Mamma about it; she will be sure to know." While they were waiting, a boatman kindly broke off that part of the rock in which the shells lay, in order to render them more portable, as Charles wished to put them in his cabinet.

"I can hear Papa and all of them," said Bessie; "how hollow their voices sound in the

mouth of the cavern." — "Let us go," said Charles ; " they are beckoning."

On reaching the party, they were told that they would not again enter the boat, but were now on their way to a small fishing village at a little distance, where the chaises had been ordered to meet them. They were quite reconciled to the change, on its being explained, that as the wind was quite fair for them in coming, it would consequently be directly opposed to them in returning ; and the sea having become rougher, the sail would be unsafe and disagreeable. While they were taking a cup of tea, (the best the humble inn afforded,) Charles brought forth his newly-found curiosity.

"Put it safely in your basket now, dear," said his Mamma, after admiring it ; "we

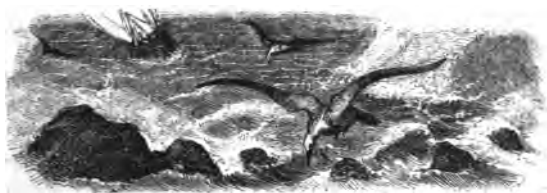
will talk about it to-morrow ; you have seen and heard enough for one day.”—“ Very well, Mamma ; and that will be a pleasure to come.”

“ Our chaises are ready,” said Mr. Graham, entering the room. Then addressing Mr. Alan, “ Will you take the lead in returning, as I am not much acquainted with this route ?”

Charles gave a long gaze at the expanse of ocean, now broken into countless white breakers, and dashing with awful roar on the rock-bound coast ; but, as it receded from his view, he sank into a revery concerning all the pleasures that day had afforded ; from which, however, he was soon aroused by Bessie, who, having fallen fast asleep, dropped her head on his shoulder. Mamma threw a large shawl over her, and Charles supported her

with his arm, though he was himself scarcely able to keep his eyes open.

The moon, with her silvery light, shone brightly on them as they alighted at their own door.



CHAPTER VII.

FOSSIL SHELLS.

“ Now, Charles,” said Mr. Graham on the morning after their trip to the sea-shore, “ bring me your Pinna, and then I will clean it for you, that it may be fit for preservation ; I am glad to see you have not broken it at all. Now, go to your Mamma, love.”

“ If you please, Mamma,” said Charles, producing his last-found curiosity, “ will you tell me, before I begin my lessons, how these pretty shells came to be fixed in this rock. Bessie thinks they are *not* shells ; and indeed they are so hard, that perhaps she is right.”

“It is a very natural supposition for a little girl, though not a correct one. These are called *fossil* shells; and I think it is most likely they have been enclosed in the firm rock, from which you detached them, ever since the deluge.”

“The *deluge*! Mamma. What, the great flood which covered all the world, and drowned every living thing but Noah, and those who were in the ark with him?”

“Yes, my dear, the very same: it is to the effects of the flood that I can alone attribute your finding shells in such a singular situation; for do you not see that it is contrary to the course of nature?” — “Yes, Mamma; but, if you please, explain it more clearly.”

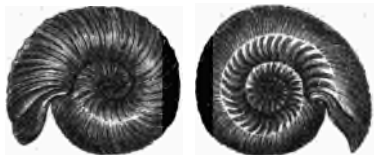
“Why, Charles, you know, that during the flood the waters covered the face of the whole

earth ; therefore, it is supposed that these shells, and a great many others, which are continually being found, were washed up from the depths of the sea, and left by the retiring waters on the high mountains and hills, and, in fact, almost everywhere. In the course of ages, and by the convulsions of nature, (such as earthquakes, violent storms, &c.) they became deeply imbedded in the surface. Perhaps, at the beginning, the hard substance in which you found these shells, was much less solid or firm, than it is at present ; and as that changed, the nature of the shells changed also ; in the same manner as those fossil shells which are found in chalk have a white chalky appearance. But this subject is almost too difficult for you to understand at present ; and when you are older, your Papa can

give you a much better knowledge of it than I can. I will only just tell you, that no animal inhabits shells of this kind now ; and that remains of fishes and quadrupeds are frequently found of a very different description from any that are now living."

"Then I suppose, Mamma, you cannot tell me the name of these beautiful shells?"

"Yes, dear, I can tell you the name which clever men, who have studied the subject a great deal, have given them: they are *Ammonites*; do you think you can remember?"



"Ammonites? Mamma, will you please write

it for me, and then I shall be more likely to do so : thank you ; that will do."

No sooner had Charles finished his lessons, than he ran to fetch his little book of discoveries, returning slowly to his seat at the table, and looking for the place at the same time. "A verse!" he exclaimed in astonishment; "how came this here? But I know it is your writing, dear Mamma; how very kind of you to do it: will you read it to me first, please? You can make it sound better than I can."—"Oh! do you read it, Mamma," said Elizabeth; "I guess it is something about yesterday."—"Your conjectures are right this time, dear; but I am going to read, as you wished me to do."

THE
REMEMBRANCE OF A PLEASANT DAY;
SUPPOSED TO BE WRITTEN BY
CHARLES GRAHAM.

THE sun shone bright in the sky of blue,
And the sea reflected its golden hue ;
With joy I stood on the pebbly shore,
And heard at my feet the breakers roar :
Oh ! I love to watch their crests of snow,
Fly off like a cloud, when the breezes blow !
And over the rocks I love to roam,
Around whose base the billows foam,
For there I could linger the livelong day,
Filling my basket with sea-weeds gay :
While often would meet my wondering view,
Shells of a form so strange and new :
There all secure from the boisterous main,
The *Pinna* is anchored with silken chain ;

Though the waves wash over its fragile form,
The cable is strong and defies the storm.
'Tis a joy to climb on the craggy steep,
And hear the winds around you sweep ;
To watch the bark sail merrily by ;
And the gulls o'er the breaking billows fly,
Now plunging to seize their finny prey,
Now soaring aloft, away ! away !
And sad was the parting I gave to thee,
Thou beautiful, bounding, and billowy sea !

“Thank you, Mamma ; it is very true indeed ; I felt just like that, only I could not put it in words.”—“How could you tell,” said Elizabeth, “what his thoughts were ? For my part, I did not see much pleasure in slipping about on those green slimy rocks.”—“I dare say not, it was hardly a suitable place for a little girl ; but I saw Charles enjoying himself completely.”—

“ Will you give me a nice pen, Mamma? for I must write very neatly under this little verse: and I must make haste, too, or I shall not have time to take a walk with Papa.”

CHAPTER VIII.

AN INVALID GUEST.—THE OTTER.

“POOR Herbert! I am sorry to hear this!” exclaimed Mr. Graham, while reading a letter one morning at breakfast-time. “Is anything the matter?” asked Mrs. Graham, with some anxiety.

“My cousin Herbert has been dangerously ill with a fever, indeed, almost at the point of death, but now is slowly recovering; and as the doctors advise his removal to a more bracing air, this letter is to inquire if we can receive him.



THE OTTER.

I am sure I may answer it in the affirmative, and say that my dear Mary will nurse him with a sister's care."

"Yes, indeed," said Mrs. Graham, "do urge his coming; I shall rejoice to become acquainted with one, to whom you have always been so much attached."—"But there is a doubt expressed by the writer," continued Mr. Graham; "that as there are children in the house, Herbert may not enjoy the perfect quiet which is so necessary; but I think I may assure him, that my Charles and Elizabeth would, with pleasure, give up their little plays for the sake of their father's friend. And as for Harry, I think we can keep him from being too noisy."

"Oh! please, Papa," said Charles, "write and say we will be as quiet as possible, and try

to make the gentleman happy.”—“Yes,” said Elizabeth, “you know, when we want to make a noise, we can go into the field or somewhere, far from the house.”—“Very well; then, my dears, there seems to be no objection to my writing immediately.”—“When do you think we may expect Herbert?” asked Mrs. Graham.

“He will most likely set off on the receipt of my letter; but, as he can only travel by short stages, it may be Saturday before he arrives.”

“Saturday!” said Elizabeth, as she left the room; “and this is only Tuesday—what a time to come! Don’t you want to see Papa’s cousin very much, Charles?”—“Yes, I do,” said he: “I can just fancy him a tall pale gentleman, with dark hair and eyes.”

“Not so tall as Papa,” said Elizabeth, “but

wearing a black frock-coat and white trousers. But I am very much afraid he will not like us children.”—“ I do not know why you should fancy so,” said Charles, “ if we do not give him any trouble.”

As Saturday drew near, Elizabeth’s curiosity increased; and many conversations did she and Charles hold concerning their expected guest. On the day itself, she followed her Mamma up and down stairs, watching the preparations which were being made. A large easy chair was wheeled into the visitor’s pretty bed-room, which looked on to the garden, with a glimpse of the church through the trees: while in the distance an undulating line of green hills seemed basking in the sun: roses and jasmine peeping in at the casement windows, completed the pretty appearance.

“What can I do to help you, Mamma?” asked Elizabeth. “Nothing, thank you; unless you spread the clean cover on the dressing-table, and take the green pincushion from the drawer. That will do nicely; now I am going to sit down at work.”

Charles was in the hall getting his hat, and hearing his sister on the stairs, said he should be glad of her company. “No, thank you,” she replied; “I am going to sit in the front porch to listen for wheels.”—“Then the minutes will seem like hours: *I* am going to the dingle, to look for novelties,” so away he walked to the little wicket-gate, before mentioned.

The dingle, as the children called it, but more properly the glen, was a lonely sequestered spot; its abrupt descent was thickly studded with pol-

lard oak, sycamore, and the dark birch, while its tangled brushwood rendered it the resort of numerous birds and insects. Its noonday stillness was broken by the rushing of the stream which wound through it, in its way from the neighbouring hills into the sea. By one of the bends of the stream, stood a venerable oak, whose massy trunk had been completely riven by lightning; and now one half bowed its still verdant head so low, that it seemed to form a natural bridge. To this spot Charles made his difficult way: and scrambling on hands and knees along the rugged stem, lay looking down on the clear water beneath him. Washed down by the rapid current, the stones had accumulated in large quantities, forming many little whirlpools and eddies.

This was a capital spot for fish; they might

be seen in abundance leaping out of the water, and appearing to joy in their existence; for salmon especially are fond of rapid noisy streams. Suddenly, but stealthily, from a deep cavity in the grassy bank, there issued an animal, whose form was unknown to Charles, and who, taken quite by surprise at the apparition, stirred neither hand nor foot.

Compared with the shortness of his legs, the animal was of great length, perhaps measuring two feet, while his tail was one foot and a half: his covering was a thick fur of a blackish brown colour, with white spots under the chin and beside the nose: his eyes and ears were very small but acute, and he used them to some purpose. After a few moments' survey, he slipped quietly and gracefully into the water, which was

so clear that his motions could be seen even when at some depth. Charles admired his playful evolutions as he rolled over and over, twisting himself into a variety of attitudes. But he did not long waste his time thus; he rose to the surface, and put his head against the stream, that he might come unobserved upon his prey; for fishes when reposing or waiting for food always have their heads *up* the water.

Charles shuddered involuntarily while watching the animal in pursuit of a moderate-sized salmon, who seemed unconscious of his danger, till his enemy was close upon him; he gave one violent leap out of the water, but he gained nothing by it; his pursuer seized him immediately on alighting, fixed his sharp teeth just below the head, and carried him off. Charles was much interested

about this singular animal, who seemed so completely at home in the water ; and he would have stayed to watch him for a longer time, had not his tender heart grieved to witness the unceremonious death of his favourite fishes. " I must find out who you are, and all about you, and then I will pay you another visit," said he, quitting his place on the overhanging tree. " I wish Elizabeth had seen him ; I know she would have enjoyed it more than being disappointed by the sound of every trumpery cart which came along the road."

When Charles reached the house, he observed an unusual appearance of bustle : boxes stood in the hall, and William was seen going up stairs with coffee, &c. " Well ! so I suppose there has been an arrival," said Charles to his sister ; " have you seen cousin Herbert ?"

“Only just a glimpse through a crack in the hall-closet, where I ran when I found he was really coming: Papa supported him up-stairs, and he looked so very ill.” Charles could not help laughing to hear of Elizabeth’s having run away after all, and said he supposed she was afraid to be seen. “Why, I can hardly tell you why I did so; but it seemed most comfortable to be out of the way.”

“Mamma,” said Charles in the evening, “can you talk to me now about another discovery of mine?”—“Yes, dear; tell me what it was.” He then gave as clear and distinct an account of the animal as he was able, dwelling with much delight on the ease of its motions, and its serpent-like elasticity of body.

Mrs. Graham fetched a volume of natural his-

tory, from the book-shelves, and showed Charles an exact representation of the animal he had seen. "It is an Otter," said she; "and I am very glad you have had an opportunity of seeing it: in this little account it says, that the otters inhabit burrows or holes, very close to the water's edge, and frequently hidden by a projecting bank; and though the animal lives so much in the water, he forms a soft nest of grass at the bottom, for his better accommodation. His fur is of such a nature, that the water will not soak through it."

"Oh, yes, Mamma; I noticed when he came out of the stream, how fast the water ran off him."

"Otters are bold and strong, and their bite is very sharp: they will not scruple to defend them-

selves resolutely, when attacked, even against more powerful foes. If taken from their nest when very young, and fed on bread and vegetables instead of fish, they may be rendered tame and gentle. I have heard a curious anecdote of an American Otter, which I think will amuse you. This animal had been tamed, and showed such an attachment to the house where it was kept, and its inhabitants, that it would go out and return again of its own accord. If, in its rambles, it chanced to meet any one it knew, it would follow them like a dog, though it caused it great exertion ; for its legs being so short, it was obliged to leap instead of walk, and soon became fatigued. In its games of play with the other domestic animals, its natural disposition was frequently seen, by the keenness of its bite." "Poor thing !"

said Charles ; “ it must have been droll to see it ; but I would rather it were enjoying itself in the water.” “ See,” said Mrs. Graham, “ there is Papa in the garden ; let us go and walk with him.”

CHAPTER IX.

MAKING ACQUAINTANCE.—THE BLACKBIRDS.

GREATLY did Herbert enjoy the quiet of the Parsonage after the noise and bustle of many of the inns, where he had been obliged to tarry ; and it was with renewed feelings of health that he arose, on the morning after his arrival. When Mr. Graham entered his room, to inquire if he needed anything, he was surprised to see him dressed, and sitting by the open window, enjoying the sweet morning sounds and scents.

“ My dear Graham,” said he, rising, “ I be-

gin to feel like myself again ; the pure air of this delightful place will soon set me up. I have been watching your three sweet children amusing themselves in the garden ; but I think they have not spied *me* out yet. Is it on my account that they all, even the youngest, scarcely speak above a whisper ? and yet they look so full of health and spirits."

" Yes, Herbert, I believe they are afraid of disturbing you ; they have been making sundry inquiries about you this morning."

" I long to get acquainted with them," said Herbert ; " will you give me your arm down stairs, as I am rather apt to be giddy."

Herbert's winning manners were particularly pleasing to children ; and before breakfast was removed, Charles and Elizabeth looked upon him

as a dear friend ; and Harry became very sociable during the few minutes he was allowed to remain in the parlour ; but as he could not keep his mirth within proper bounds, he was soon despatched to nurse's care again.

After school, Charles repaired with his writing materials to the Rose-porch, and commenced an account of the otter, its manner of fishing and so forth, in his book of discoveries. So intent was he over his employment, that his cousin Herbert, who had been strolling in the garden, came in and seated himself on the opposite bench quite unperceived. "Why, Charlie?" said he, "you are so absorbed in your book ; is it one of your own composition ? May I have a peep at it ?" Charles immediately handed it to his cousin, saying, as the colour came to his cheeks, "You

will not find it worth reading.”—“ I do not think so at all,” said Herbert, with an encouraging smile : “ it is both useful and amusing to keep an account of all the wonderful things which come under your notice. — How sweetly those blackbirds are singing,” added he, after a pause : “ are they in your garden ? ”

“ Yes,” answered Charles ; “ they have a nest in the hedge, on the stump of an old thorn, on the other side of the lawn ; and they built almost in the same place last year : you would like to see how tame they are ; we can go nearly close to them, and they do not fly away ; neither did they seem afraid when I peeped into their pretty nest to see their young ones. In the winter, when it was so bitterly cold, they came every morning to the parlour-window for the crumbs,

which we gave them.”—“ Pretty creatures !” said Herbert : “ can you tell me what sort of a nest they live in ?”—“ Oh, yes, for I noticed it particularly ; the outside was of hay and moss ; and I think it was lined with wool and hair, coiled round to keep it in its place ; but the four little birds filled it so full, that I could not see very plainly.”—“ A friend of mine,” said Herbert, “ once told me an anecdote of the bravery of two blackbirds, of which she was an eye-witness ; would you like to hear it ?”—“ Oh, yes, if you please ; I am so fond of stories, and so is Bessie ; may I run and fetch her ?”

“ To be sure, Charlie ; but I cannot promise you a long tale.”

“ Now, we are quite ready,” said Charles, returning with his sister.

“ This pair of blackbirds had just reared a young brood, and were teaching them to use their wings, and provide for their own wants, when a cat, who was prowling about the garden, espied one of the poor helpless little things, fluttering from twig to twig. Thinking, I suppose, that she could make an easy prey of this tempting tit-bit, she was in the act of creeping stealthily along, preparing for a spring, when she was valiantly assailed by the parent birds, who flew at her, flapping their wings, and scolding loudly; and, if I remember right, they even ventured to peck at her. Their fierce assault caused her to retire from the tree; but they were not satisfied until they had driven her fairly out of the garden.”

“ Capital ! capital !” exclaimed Charles.
“ What bold birds !” said Elizabeth. “ Well,

I wish they would all agree to serve the cats so ; at any rate, those who have plenty to eat at home."

"It is very difficult," said Herbert, "to overcome the natural disposition of animals ; and it is almost sure to break out when any strong temptation offers itself."

"Is it not strange, Charlie," said Elizabeth, as soon as they were alone, "that both your guesses and mine should be partly right ? You see Cousin Herbert wears just the sort of coat I said he would."—"Yes, Bessie ; but you were wrong about his being shorter than Papa, and so was I about black eyes ; but it does not matter, for he is much kinder than either of us expected."

"Yes, indeed," said Elizabeth ; "I wish he would live here always, for I like him so very much."

CHAPTER X.

VISIT TO THE DINGLE.—THE SWALLOW'S
NEST.

It happened that about a fortnight after Herbert became an inmate of the Parsonage, a little excursion was planned to visit the ruins of an ancient abbey, situated in a romantic and secluded part of the hills. Herbert was to mount a rough Shetland pony, while the rest of the party, with provisions, &c. were to be conveyed in an humble equipage, namely, a covered waggon.

As the expedition was not to start until twelve o'clock, the children were required to attend to a

part of their lessons previously ; as Mr. Graham thought that they would enjoy the coming pleasure much more than if they had been idling about all the morning.

Charles was not much disposed to acquiesce with this decision, as his tasks for that day were in the Latin Grammar and Vocabulary, which he had but just commenced ; and I am sorry to say, it was with a bad grace that he took his seat with his Papa in the study.

He soon made up his mind that his lessons were too difficult to be learned ; and allowing his thoughts to dwell on his expected excursion, his eyes wandered far from his book, and his Papa's warnings were for once quite unheeded. And so the minutes slipped away ; and when the waggon and the pony were at the door, and every one else

quite ready, Charles discovered his error; and how much he had lost, for want of a little attention and perseverance.

“Surely, Papa,” argued he, “if I learn my lessons when I come home, it will do just as well.”—“No, my dear; it really grieves me to deprive you of what I am sure would give you pleasure; but I should not feel it right to do otherwise, after your sad waste of time this morning; and if you could not fix your thoughts now, much less in the evening when you are fatigued, and when you would have so many things to fill your mind.”

Poor Charles burst into tears as he heard them drive away from the door; and for some time he was inconsolable. But cook, who was now his sole companion, recommended him to dry his eyes;

and get his lessons quite perfect ; “ and then you know, Master Charles, you can run in the garden and enjoy yourself as well as your sister and brother.” Charles thought that this was good advice ; and in a little time he began to act upon it, feeling much happier as he did so.

One by one the difficulties were all mastered, and he wondered how he could have been so foolish before ; fresh tears filled his eyes at this thought, but he checked them speedily, determined to take warning another time. He now hastened to put away his books, and ran out into the garden. “ I shall just have time to go to the brook before my dinner is ready,” said he ; “ and if I am fortunate enough to make any discoveries, I shall have something to tell, as well as to hear, when Mamma comes home.”

When Charles reached the dingle, he lost his way among the intricate paths ; and instead of coming to the riven oak and the otter's hole, as he intended, he suddenly issued from the thick shade, at a spot which he had never seen.

A beautiful little glade was before him, sloping gradually down to the stream : the sun was shining joyously on its bright grassy carpet, all studded as it was with the gay orchis and cranes'-bill ; while on the margin of the water,

“ The meadow-sweet breathed its delicious perfume : ”
a cool refreshing breeze was rustling among the verdant boughs, which enclosed this sweet spot. Charles was so enchanted, that his first exclamation was, “ Oh ! to have a little rustic hut, and live here always. But perhaps I should find it rather dull sometimes, especially in dark rainy weather.”

With this satisfactory conclusion he laid himself down, and shutting his eyes, listened to the many varieties of song which were poured forth on every side. "There! that is the Linnet, I know very well:

but hark! what noise is that; so loud and harsh, just like the old watchman's rattle which I found in



the lumber-room;" and Charles suddenly raised himself on one elbow, and looked eagerly around him.

Presently he heard the noise again, and then he crept quietly to the spot. There, perched on a withered branch which bent over the water, was a

bird of brilliant plumage, bright blue and green blending into one. His throat was nearly white, and his wings tipped with black ; in size, he was not much larger than a sparrow ; his beak was of a greenish yellow, long and slender, and his legs very short, and far back in the body.

His bright eye seemed to pierce the water beneath him in every direction, as if in search of prey. Charles admired him extremely ; he thought him the handsomest English bird he had ever seen ; indeed he began to doubt if he were not some caged pet, who had escaped from confinement.

Suddenly the bird threw himself forward, plunged his head in the stream, and seized a little fish, which he swallowed in an instant. " Ho ! ho ! my pretty creature," thought Charles ; " so

you live by fishing as well as the Otter. Well ! I suppose I must not quarrel with you for that." Now the bird quitted his perch, and skimmed over the water, at a small height above its surface, sustaining himself by a rapid motion of his wings, frequently plunging, however, for the fish which caught his eye below.

At last he disappeared along the windings of the stream from Charles's sight, who had been taking particular notice of his plumage and actions, that he might describe them to his Mamma ; and, in return, learn from her the name of this beautiful bird, and what kind of a nest he made for himself.

In the afternoon, Charles busied himself in putting his own and Elizabeth's garden in good order, and in repairing the lattice-work of their

little harbour; thus bringing into use a small, but complete, box of tools, which his grandpapa had sent him on his birth-day. Having neatly finished his work, and trained the honeysuckle over it, he returned to the house, and was glad to find that his tea was waiting for him. When this was despatched, he begged cook to allow him to walk about a quarter of a mile up the road, to the brow of a steep hill, and there to watch for the returning party. After many strict injunctions not to wander from the road, he received the desired permission. Charles sauntered slowly along, gathering many flowers from the hedges, or stopping to admire the pretty moths, whom he had unintentionally disturbed; until having gained the prescribed spot, he strained his eyes along the whole extent of road which was spread

before him, traversing hill and valley; but no waggon, no cantering pony, could he descry. He looked around for some amusement to beguile the time; when the thought struck him, "If I could climb this very high bank, I should be able to see much farther, and into the valleys too."

In order to accomplish his object, it was necessary to use both hands and feet, and to catch firmly hold of the tufts of grass to prevent himself from falling. "Really," thought he, "I did not expect such hard work as this, or I should have been content to stay where I was. I must sit down here to get my breath again. I cannot imagine," continued he, looking around him, "how all those little holes in the bank came to be made; they seem very deep; I think I can

crawl along this ridge and examine one." With great caution, Charles proceeded until he reached the nearest hole. It appeared to have been recently made, as the sand which had been thrown out of it was quite soft and loose. Charles gently thrust in his arm, but could not reach to the extremity; he found that the passage was rather winding, and sloped gradually upwards.

But he was soon disturbed in his employment by the arrival of a pair of Swallows, who fluttered fearlessly around him, skimming over the holes, apparently in great distress. Charles could not at first comprehend their singular actions; but on seeing some more of their kind flying in and out of another distant hole, he instantly guessed how the matter stood. "Poor little birds!" said he, "have you been at the trouble to dig this

deep place in the hard sand? and do you think I am going to destroy it, or to take your young ones, which, I suppose, are laid snugly at the bottom of it? No, no; I would not do it for the world: I only wanted to find out something new. There, now, I am going away as fast as I can."

Having regained his former position, Charles thought it was time to descend; but it required some courage to make the attempt. The sand and stones in some places being so loose, that they rattled down with the least weight.

"But I must try," said Charles, "for the waggon will soon be here now; I can see it coming over the top of the next hill." With a few slips and tumbles, Charles reached the bottom, not sorry to feel himself once more on firm

ground ; but yet far from regretting his scramble, as it had given him an opportunity of obtaining more knowledge.

He had but just time to rid his clothes from the dust and gravel before the waggon arrived. Elizabeth, who sat in the front, was the first to see him ; she requested the driver to stop and help her brother up, to sit by her ; it seemed so long since they had met. In listening to his sister's lively account of the proceedings of the day, Charles almost forgot his own disappointments ; and how affectionately he kissed her when she told him how much happier she should have been, had "her dear Charlie" been with her.



THE KINGFISHER.

CHAPTER XI.

THE KINGFISHER.—THE BANK SWALLOWS.

“WELL! my dear little boy!” said Mr. Graham, drawing Charles to his side; “and what have you done with yourself all this long day alone? you have not been very dull, I hope?”

“No, Papa, thank you: first of all I learnt my lessons perfectly, that you might hear me repeat them before breakfast to-morrow; and then I went to the dingle, and found out such a pretty place! I must take you there some day;

but what pleased me the most was a beautiful bird, flying over the water, and making a very hearty meal of small fishes, every few minutes uttering his strange rattling cry." Charles, having given his Papa a minute description of the bird's form and colour, eagerly inquired its name and history.

"It must have been a *Kingfisher*, my dear," said Mr. Graham, "for your account is very clear; and I know that that brook is rather famous for them, because it is so well-stocked with fish. I have frequently seen them on its banks myself, and thought of those pretty lines in the 'Minstrelsy of the Woods.'

'Did you ever the royal Kingfisher see,
Resting himself on the willow-tree?
Lightly he sits on the bending spray,
And watches the course of his finny prey.'

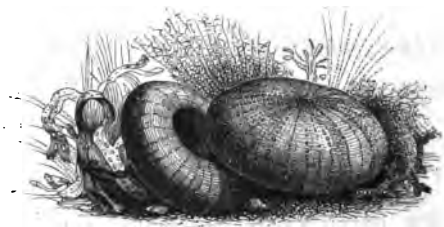
Then swiftly he skims o'er the crystal stream,
And his wings with azure and emerald gleam.
The King of the fishing tribe is he,
And he is clad right royally.'

"It is a celebrated bird, having been known to the ancients, by the name of the *Halcyon*; and is mentioned by several of them in their writings.

"There were a great many things related of it in those days, which subsequent inquiry has proved to be incorrect. Pliny, a Roman author, states, that the very sea, and those that sail thereon, know when the *Halcyon* is brooding over her young; for although it takes place in December, the middle of winter, the sea is calm and tranquil; therefore they were called the *Halcyon days*.

"Curious were the mistaken notions, which

even learned men held, respecting the nest of the Kingfisher. You have seen what are commonly called *Sea-eggs*, (some about the size of a cocoa-

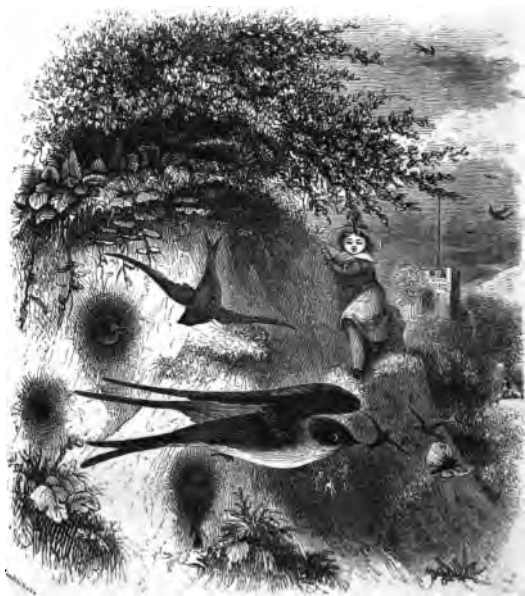


nut,) a round hollow kind of a shell, with a small opening on the under side, thickly covered over the surface with spines. Well, for a long time, these were supposed to have been constructed by this bird, for the reception of her eggs."—"Oh! Papa, how strange," said Charles. "Why, cousin Herbert told me the other day, that those *Sea-eggs* were the covering of an animal called the

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THE BANK SWALLOWS.

Sea-urchin: but what sort of a nest does the Kingfisher *really* live in, if you please?"

"It has been clearly discovered, that it makes its nest by *mining*, or digging a hole in the earth: the person who first asserted this fact, was much afraid he should not be believed, as he contradicted the account of the ancient writers. At the end of the hole, which is from two to four feet long, and widening in the interior, a kind of bedding is formed of the dried bones of very small fishes, and on this the Kingfisher hatches and rears her young."

"Well, how very droll," said Charles. "Your history of this underground nest reminds me of another, which I found in the high sand-bank; and which I think must have been made by some Swallows, who seemed in much trouble, lest I

should break in the roof, or do some such damage. Pray, are they the same kind of Swallows as those who build under the barn roof, and by the windows of the house?"

"Only a different branch of the same family, Charlie. The Swallow is a *migratory* bird; that is, it travels from one country to another, that it may always enjoy warm weather: you have seen large flights of them taking their departure for southern lands, when the summer is leaving *us*."

"Yes, Papa; and it says in my little verse-book,

'The swallow is a bonnie bird, comes twittering
o'er the sea;

And gladly is her carol heard, for the summer
days to be.'

But how can such small creatures make those deep holes in the sand?"

“By using their sharp little bills, which are admirably fitted for their work : you would be surprised to see how quickly they peck away, like a miner with his pick-axe. They are not obliged to perform their arduous operation every year, as the hole, being once completed, serves them from time to time ; their instinct leading them on their return from their wanderings to the very same spot again.”

“How wonderful !” said Charles ; “after having flown so many miles across the sea, to think of their being able to find their own little nests again. I wonder they do not often make mistakes.”

“Well, really !” said Elizabeth, who had been an attentive listener, “it is very curious for little birds to live under ground ; but, for my part, if I

were one of them, I should much prefer having a nest in some tall tree, where I could sit and look down on the earth, and where I could be rocked to sleep every night by the winds: would not you, Charlie? But I think it must be quite bed-time, I am so tired and sleepy."

"Well, good-b'ye, my dears," said Mr. Graham; "I think you will sleep very well without rocking to-night, at any rate."

"Will you lend me your Book of Discoveries, Charles?" said Herbert, as the little boy was leaving the room.

"Oh, yes, to be sure," answered Charles, running to the book-case to fetch it; little guessing that on the following morning he should have the pleasure of reading another addition to it, in the handwriting of his dear cousin, on

THE SWALLOW.

Ah ! welcome little feathered stranger !
Welcome again to England's isle ;
Gladly we hail thee, pretty ranger,
Thou tell'st of Spring's returning smile :
Thou com'st when Winter's reign is o'er,
And flowers delight the eye once more.

The farmer gives thee blithesome greeting,
Thou foe to all the insect race ;
'Neath the high cliff thou'rt sure of meeting,
A shelter and a resting place.
There, little miner, dig thy home,
And rear in peace thy tender brood,
Until stern Winter bids thee roam,
Once more in quest of food :
Then "plume thy active wing and fly,
To realms beneath a southern sky."

Would that thy tiny tongue could tell
Of all thy wanderings long ;

Of the fair lands thou know'st so well,
And those thou'st dwelt among.
I marvel much a thing so weak,
Could safely cross the briny deep.
But I have learnt, that He who spanned
The heavens, and in His mighty hand
The waters holds, extends His care
To the least bird that skims the air.

CHAPTER XII.

THE WRENS.

AT the extremity of Mr. Graham's garden, was a little round hut, which was used as a root-house, and a depository for all sorts of garden-tools: the wide projecting eaves of its thatched roof were supported by rustic pillars of knotted wood, and on each side of its humble door were fixed benches, serving either for a seat or table. It could also boast of one small window, commanding a full view of a green ditch, and a thick row of alder-bushes on the opposite bank.

It was to this spot that, one Saturday afternoon, Charles and Elizabeth, heavily laden, were seen hurrying with importance in their looks; Charles's burden consisting chiefly of his box of tools, and sundry pieces of wood; and Elizabeth's of cotton, scissors, twine, and scraps of linen and ribbon.

“Heyday!” said Herbert, as they passed the harbour, where he was sitting with his book; “pray, where are you going with so many goods and chattels? Take care, or you will be overtaken by the rain; the sky is very lowering.”—“Do you know what we are going to do, Cousin Herbert?” asked Elizabeth. — “I shall soon know, if you will be so good as to tell me,” said he.—“Say whether you can keep a secret first, please,” said Charles.

“ Oh, you may depend upon me ; I would not let the cat out of the bag, I am sure.”

“ Well, then,” said Elizabeth, “ Charlie is going to try if he can make a small boat for Harry, because he so often wishes for one ; and I , am to make the sails, and the flags. We have found the picture of a boat to copy from.”

“ And,” added Charles, “ I have often watched an old sailor, who lives in the village, making them ; if I had but a good shape drawn on this piece of wood, I think I could manage it.”—“ If you will give me leave,” said Herbert, “ I will help you to the best of my ability, though it is many years since I attempted anything of the sort.”

“ Oh, thank you !” cried both the children ; “ how much we are obliged to you ; now we shall get on nicely.”

After they had been working for some time very industriously beneath the sheltering eaves, not at all heeding the pattering rain, Charles went inside the hut to search for some materials for their boat building. Having groped about quietly for several minutes, his companions outside were startled by his sudden exclamation of "A discovery! a discovery!"—"What is it?" cried Elizabeth, rushing in. "Oh! such a beautiful mossy ball; only look, Cousin Herbert; tell me if it is not a bird's nest. And I see, here is a small opening in the side; I suppose that is the door."—"That is a Wren's nest, Charlie," said Herbert; "and as it is now vacated, I think we may as well take it down and examine it. The Wrens are called *dome-builders*, because, you see, they shelter their nests with this round roof,

I have seen a little Wren carrying a tuft of moss, almost as large as his own body, for a considerable distance ; perhaps to save himself the trouble of mak-



ing so many journeys ; these tufts he cements firmly together, lining the whole with a finer and softer kind, with feathers, hair, worsted, or anything suitable which he can find. The Wren does not seem very particular in his choice of a situation ; sometimes he fixes his abode beneath the overhanging bank of a river, or in the thick shade of ivy, and his nests may not unfrequently be seen under the bare bough of a tree. Did you

ever hear of the haymaker, who having hung up his coat in a barn while he was at work, left it there for several days, as he had no occasion to use it. But when at last he took it down and began to put it on, he found one sleeve completely blocked up, with a mass of straw, moss, and feathers, which, on examination, proved to be the nest of a Wren ! The poor little dislodged tenants followed the haymaker, scolding him loudly for his destruction of their work."

The children were much diverted with this anecdote, and eagerly asked cousin Herbert if he had any more to tell them.

" Really, my dears, I am one of the worst people you could come to for stories ; I never can remember them. But if you would like, I can just tell you a little about the *Golden-crested*

Wren, which is the smallest of our English birds : without its feathers, it is about an inch long, though when fully clothed with tail, &c. measures three inches."

"Oh ! what a tiny mite !" said Elizabeth ; "how much I should like to see one. But why are they called Golden-crested ?"

"Because they have a beautiful tuft, or *crest*, of orange-coloured feathers on their heads. The reason why they are seldom seen is easily told ; they are so small that a single leaf will hide them from view ; but when the trees are bare of foliage, you may observe them flying about in small companies, with other little birds."

"Does it build a domed nest, like the other Wren ?" asked Charles.

"That depends upon circumstances ; if the

spot which it selects is secure from rain and wind, it does not require it. Their nests are most commonly suspended beneath the broad bough of a fir, cedar, or yew-tree, the thick flat leaves forming a natural umbrella over it. The materials generally used are green moss and lichen,



bound together with wool, or spiders' webs, and lined with such a profusion of feathers, that the young birds seem almost buried alive. Do you

not remember what the little verse says to the Golden-crested Wren?

‘ And a few clustering leaves of the forest-tree,
Will serve to shelter thy cradle and thee.
Concealing thee safely from every eye,
Until danger and fear have passed thee by.’ ”

“ Oh ! how pretty ! ” said Elizabeth ; “ do say it all to us.” — “ I have quite forgotten the rest ; I think you must learn it, and repeat it to me. Papa can lend you the book if you ask him.”

“ I will go and get it directly,” said she.
“ Stay, stay, little maiden, you cannot go while it is pouring with rain like this ! ” said Herbert, detaining her. “ Oh ! what are we to do now ? ” said Charles, looking up from his work. “ That remains to be seen,” Herbert replied : “ I won-

der they have not raised a hue and cry about us at home."

"We shall be quite flooded soon," said Elizabeth, returning from a tour round the hut: "the water in the ditch is rising so fast, it is almost over the banks!"

"Dear me," said Herbert, "that sounds very alarming! As for Charlie, he is so busy with hammer and chisel, that he does not seem to care whether we are inundated or not."—"Indeed I do," said he; "I was just going to propose our setting up a loud shout, that some one might come to us with umbrellas and cloaks."

"Or, perhaps," added Elizabeth, "they would send a post-chaise to fetch us."

"Hark!" said Herbert; "do I not hear footsteps approaching, splash, splash, along the wet

path? Yes ; here is William with all things needful ; a most welcome sight ! Come, Charlie, put by your things, and let us commence our homeward journey with all speed.”



CHAPTER XIII.

THE DEATH'S-HEAD MOTH.

FOR several succeeding days the rain fell steadily and without intermission, keeping Charles and Elizabeth close prisoners in doors. Poor children ! they soon became quite weary of confinement and of watching the dark clouds, which appeared to rise in endless succession. One morning after school-hours, as they were very intent over a game of dominoes, little Harry, who was trotting about the room, suddenly exclaimed, " Pretty blue sky ! look Bessie !"—" No, you

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make a mistake, I think, dear," said she, looking up with a doubtful countenance. "Come, Bessie," said Charles, "it is your turn to lay down a domino; make haste."

"Charlie, I can't play any more now; it has left off raining, and is going to be quite fine. See how fast the dark clouds are travelling away." "Well, how pleasant!" said Charles, running to the window, and throwing it open; "this beautiful breeze will soon dry the gravel paths. I think in the evening we shall be able to go to the root-house, and get on with the boat."—"If you please, Mamma," said Elizabeth, "may we go to the paved court by the back kitchen, and play at ball, or battledoor and shuttlecock? you know, that is a very dry place."

"I have no objection, my dear," said Mrs.

Graham ; “ but you had better put on your thick shoes.”—“ Very well, Mamma : now, Charlie, are you ready ?”—“ Oh, yes, and happy enough to get into the open air again ; how sweet everything in the garden smells,” said he, looking over the palings.

“ There is too much wind for the shuttlecock, I find,” said Elizabeth ; “ it blows very far from where I want to send it : there, now ! it has lodged in the jasmine, far above my reach.”—“ Never mind,” said Charles, “ we can have a game with these balls in the way that cousin Herbert told me of ; you must take one and I the other, and we must stand three or four yards apart : that will do. Now then, you throw to me, and I to you, and the balls will often meet in the middle : is not this a famous plan ?”

—“ Yes, dear, I like it much better than our old way.”

After having amused themselves for some time, Elizabeth was called in to be dressed, and Charlie ran for a chair to stand on, that he might get down the shuttlecock. In pulling aside the thick matted twigs, he disturbed the repose of a very large and handsome caterpillar, who immediately drew back and tried to escape ; but his discoverer was too quick for him, and plucking off the little branch on which he was crawling, carried him off in triumph. “ Only see ! Mamma ! ” exclaimed Charles, running into the parlour, “ what I have found in the jasmine ! I never saw so large a caterpillar before. Is not its pale greenish yellow-body, spotted with black, and striped with blue and green, beautiful ? ”

“ Yes, my dear, I admire it very much ; and have you noticed this horn at the end of its body ? ” — “ Oh ! how very droll, Mamma. But can you tell me, what sort of a moth or butterfly this will turn to ? ”

“ Yes, Charlie ; to a very curious and rare kind, called the *Death's-head Moth*.”

“ Death's-head ! Mamma ! Who did give it that shocking name, and why ? ”

“ It was named by Linneus, a very clever naturalist ; and if you were to see the moth, I think you would say it could not have had a more suitable appellation ; because there are on the back of its head some very remarkable dots and lines, closely resembling a skull, or *death's head*. A perfect moth is from four to five inches in expanse ; the front wings are of a dark brown

colour, variegated with black and grey, with a white spot in the centre; and the hind wings are clay coloured."

"Oh, Mamma! how I should like to see it; particularly that little skull on the back of its head. Could I not keep this caterpillar until it changes?"

"You might make the attempt, my dear, though I am sadly afraid you will not succeed. Specimens have sometimes been obtained by placing the caterpillar on potato plants, set in pots in the open air, and covering them with gauze to prevent them from escaping; for they feed on the potato, as well as on the jasmine."

"Oh I could easily do that, Mamma; may I ask William to get me a large pot full?"

"We will go and see about it directly,

Charlie ; as the poor thing cannot be very comfortable in his present situation."

"The Death's-head Moth," continued Mrs. Graham, as they walked down the garden in search of William, "is often looked upon with dread by foolish superstitious people, who believe that its appearance, is a token of death ; but it is sinful to give way to these silly fancies, as there is no truth in them."—"Really," said Charles, "I wonder how any one could be so foolish as to be afraid of an insect."

"It is very singular," said Mrs. Graham, "that a single moth of this species, though unprovided with sting or shield, should venture to attack bee-hives, rob them of the honey, and disperse the inhabitants ; especially when we consider how numerous they are, and how well they

are armed with means of defence ; and yet the moth is generally victorious. We are told by an eye-witness, that sometimes the bees, as if expecting their enemy, closely barricade the entrance of the hive with wax, leaving only small passages, for one or two workers at a time ; thus, by a wonderful sagacity, securing themselves from invasion. The Death's-head Moth is one of the very few insects which are endowed with voice ; it utters a plaintive cry, something like the squeaking of a mouse."

"When do you think that the caterpillar will change to a crysalis, Mamma?"

"Most likely about the end of September ; and in a few weeks after that, I hope you will have the pleasure of seeing a perfect moth."

"I hope so too, Mamma. Will my pot of

potato plants be ready by the time I have had my dinner ?”

“ Yes, here is William ; I will tell him all about it ; meantime, you had better run home, and wash your hands, in readiness.”

CHAPTER XIV.

THE CUCKOOS.—THE PIGEONS.

ONE evening as Charles was passing slowly by the rose-bower, of which we have spoken before, he heard deep sobs as of some one in distress, proceeding from it. Touched with compassion, he gently drew aside the boughs ; and peeping in, beheld his sister with her face bathed in tears. “ Dear Bessie ! what can be the matter ? why are you in trouble and I not to know it ? has any one hurt you, or spoilt any of your things ? or have you——” done wrong he would have said, but he did not like to think such a thing.

“No, no,” said Elizabeth, trying not to sob any more; “cousin Herbert—has had a—letter; and he says he must—leave us—in a day or two. Oh! dear, what shall we do—when he—is gone!”

Poor Charles, this was sad news for him too; and though he did not outwardly show his grief as much as his sister, yet he felt it quite as much at heart. After a long silence, he said, “Let us go to him and beg him not to leave us; perhaps he may alter his mind.”—“That is not likely,” said Elizabeth, “for he seemed very sad when he read the letter; and said he was obliged to go against his will.”—“We can go and talk to him about it, notwithstanding,” Charles replied: “do you know where we can find him?”—“He is sitting in his own room, Charlie, taking a view

of the church and garden.”—“ I dare say,” said he, “ he will let us in.”

The children were readily admitted ; and taking their stand on each side of their cousin, forgot for a moment their sorrowful errand, in their pleasure at seeing the beautiful drawing which was being produced. “ I shall often look at this when I am far away, and think of the happy time I have spent here ; and of you, my sweet little cousins,” said Herbert, kissing them ; “ how much I shall miss your merry voices, and your bright faces round the table.”—“ And I am sure we shall miss your kind——” poor Charlie’s voice died away, he could say no more ; but his tearful eyes told more than his lips. “ You must not grieve, my little pets,” said Herbert ; “ for though I am forced to go away now, I hope

it will not be for long. And in the mean time I will write you a letter if you will promise to answer it."

"Oh, yes, that we will, with pleasure," said the children, brightening up.

"And then," added Herbert, "you must tell me all about your discoveries, Charlie, just as though I were here, and you were talking to me. And you, Bessie, can write to me about your worsted work; you know I am a great judge in such matters," added he with an arch smile. "By the way, I am sadly in want of a pair of smart slippers, could not you supply me?"—"Yes," said Elizabeth; "thank you for giving me something to do for you; I will try and get them done very soon, before the cold weather comes."

Having succeeded in restoring the affectionate

children to cheerfulness, he led them into the garden to join their Papa and Mamma, who were sitting on the lawn. And here an animated conversation was begun, in which it was planned, that on the morrow they should pay a long talked-of visit to a friend of Mr. Graham's, who lived at a beautiful little village, distant about thirteen miles.

“I think, Herbert,” said Mr. Graham, “you will be delighted with the country we shall pass through ; the wooded hills, and the valleys watered with clear streams ; the wide expanse of brown heath, and the rich corn-fields, present a great variety of landscape.”

“Does the village where Mr. Howard lives lie towards the sea ?” asked Herbert.

“No, the road to it runs directly inland ; yet

from the summit of a very conical hill, at the back of my friend's house, a wide stretch of ocean can be seen. But now as we have settled this matter, I will go to Jones's and hire his double-seated chaise, to be here by nine o'clock, if the weather is quite fine."

"May I go with you, Papa?" asked Charles.

"To be sure, my dear; run and fetch your hat,"

"Papa," said Charles as they walked along, "can you tell me what sort of a nest the cuckoo makes?"—"The cuckoo, my dear, is a strange bird; for she never makes any at all, but lays an egg in whatever nest she can find."—"Oh! Papa! I never heard of such a thing: makes no nest of her own! But what becomes of the egg? does the lazy cuckoo drive away the little

birds who have been at the pains to build the nest?"

"No, Charlie; she does not show sufficient love for her offspring to take even *that* trouble; but leaves her egg to be hatched, and her young to be fed and warmed, by much weaker and smaller birds than herself."

"But, Papa," said Charles, "do not they find out what has been done? or, when the eggs are hatched, do they not see that there is a stranger among them?"

"I do not think they ever suspect the trick the cuckoo has played them," said Mr. Graham, "that would be rather beyond their instinct: and instead of turning the intruder out of their nest, as you seem to suppose they ought to do, they look upon it with great pride and pleasure,

as being so much larger and finer than the others; and they treat it with peculiar favour in consequence. Pliny, in writing about the cuckoo's foster-mother, says, 'she joyeth to see so goodly a bird, and wondereth at herself that she hath hatched and reared so trim a chick.'

"Poor thing!" said Charles, with a burst of laughter, "it is a pity she should be so cheated."
—"And then," said Mr. Graham, "if birds had the power of knowing right from wrong, it would be shocking to think of the ingratitude of the stranger nestling, who, after having been reared with so much care, actually turns the other unfledged birds out of the nest, that it may enjoy it all to itself."

"How shameful!" exclaimed Charlie; "really

the cuckoos are the most unamiable birds I ever heard of."

"There is a German saying," continued Mr. Graham, "'*ungrateful as a cuckoo*;' and I think it is a correct one. But you would like to hear how this naughty young one manages to get rid of its little companions. With the assistance of its wings, it contrives to get a helpless creature on its back; then clammers up the side of the nest, until it reaches the top, where, after a moment's rest, it throws its load over the edge with a violent jerk; most likely killing it in the fall. Having felt about with its wings, to be sure that the business is properly performed, it gets down into the nest again. If in climbing up the side it ever drops its burden, it will try again and again until its purpose is effected. It once hap-

pened that two cuckoo's eggs were left in one nest; a few hours after they were hatched, a contest began between them for possession of the abode, and continued until the following afternoon: each by turns appeared likely to conquer, as he carried the other several times to the top, and then sunk down exhausted with fatigue: till at length, after various efforts, the biggest turned his brother out, together with a young hedge-sparrow, (the rightful occupier of the nest,) and an unhatched egg."

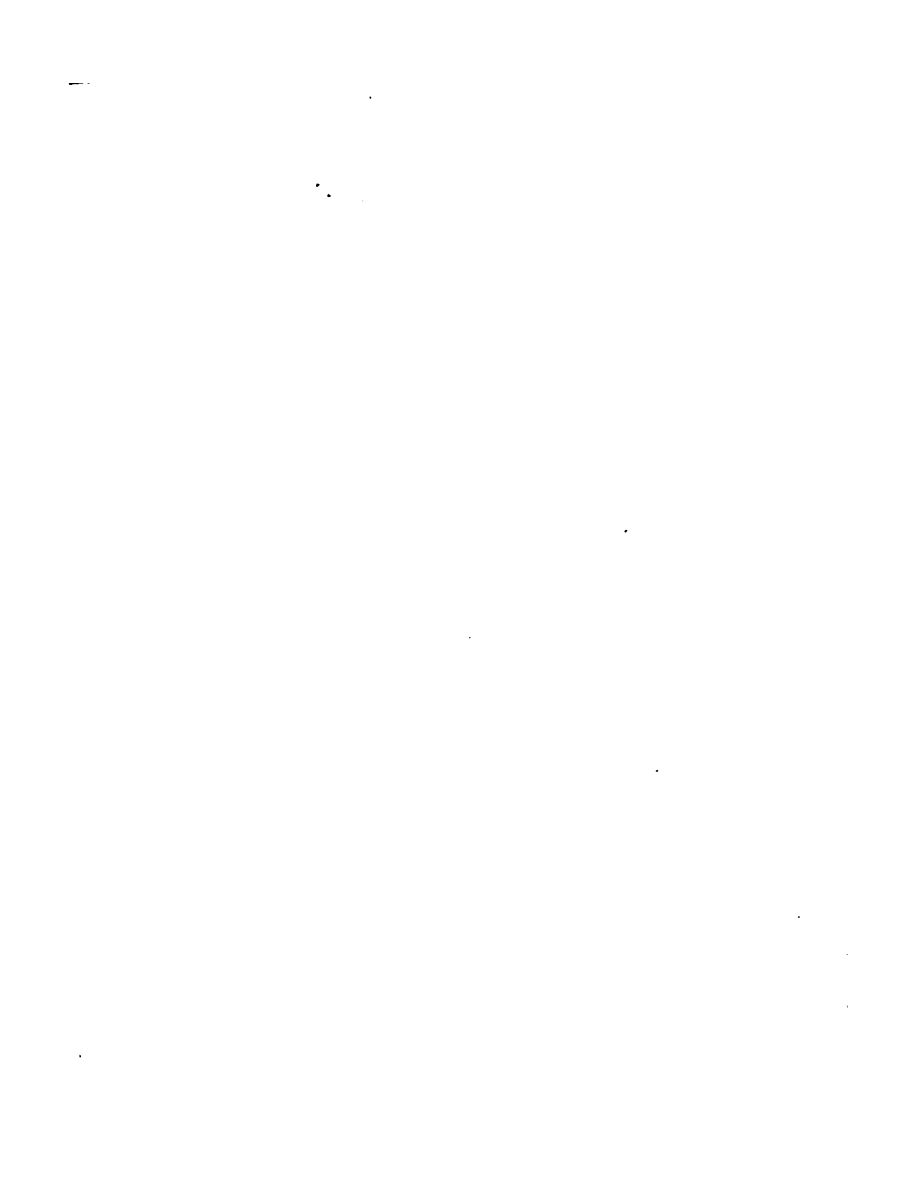
"It is a great deal too bad," said Charles; "I wish it were possible to teach them better behaviour."

"There are other kinds of birds," said Mr. Graham, "which will *occasionally* take forcible possession of aready-made nest, and drive away

the owners ; whether from a fancy to that particular spot, or from a fit of idleness, I cannot tell. I have been told of a lady, who once observed from her drawing-room window, two sparrows building a nest in a cavity of an opposite wall : for several days, a pair of pigeons, hovering near, watched all their operations ; and at last drove the sparrows away, and enlarged the nest to suit their own convenience. It was some time before they ventured both to leave the nest at once ; at length, when they did so, the lady sent a servant to examine it ; and he most thoughtlessly brought it into the house, to show his mistress the two little sparrows and two pigeons which it contained. Though he endeavoured carefully to replace it, the pigeons, finding out directly on their return that their mansion had been disturbed,

flew away and deserted their young, which of course perished.”

“Oh, what a pity !” said Charles ; “ he should only just have looked into the nest, and not have touched it at all.”





IVORY-BILLED WOODPECKER.

CHAPTER XV.

THE SNAKE.—THE WOODPECKER.

THE following morning rose as bright and fair as heart could desire ; not a cloud was to be seen in the deep blue heavens, and a cool refreshing breeze moderated the heat of the summer sun.

The children in high spirits, and with faces as cloudless as the sky, were delighted with all the new and interesting objects which they passed in their ride. At the foot of an abrupt descent, Mr. Graham stopped for a few minutes to listen

to the murmuring of a waterfall, at a little distance from the road, but obscured from it by the dense foliage. "Dear Papa," said Charles, "may we get out and look at it? we will not be long."

"I have a great curiosity to see it as well as Charlie," said Herbert; "it will be in perfection, after the late rains; so come along, dears: let me lift you out, Bessie. And now for a high jump over these palings."

"Oh! how beautiful! how lovely!" exclaimed the children in astonishment, as they watched the bright stream of water come dashing down from above, and break in white surf over the small rocks at the bottom. "Why, I really think," said Elizabeth, watching her brother's eyes steadfastly fixed upon the foaming torrent, "Charlie

has made another discovery !”—“ I have indeed, Bessie, if I am not greatly mistaken,” said Charles. “ There ! there it is again !” he continued, jumping with ecstasy. “ Do pray look, cousin Herbert ! I can see every few moments a beautiful rainbow, forming a pretty-coloured circle over the dashing spray. There ! do pray look.”

“ I observed it, my dear boy,” said Herbert ; “ but was waiting to see if your curious eyes would discover it. You may safely record that in your little book, as a sight but seldom seen. We are very fortunate in coming to the spot just in time ; in a few minutes, when the sun has gone behind those trees, you will lose sight of the rainbow.”

“ It is really a very pretty spot,” said Mrs.

Graham," joining them; "the different shades of foliage on the banks of the stream are charming."

"Yes," said Herbert; "I always like to see the light trembling birch, mixed with the massy oak, sycamore, and fir. But Papa is calling us; so, come here, you little wild things," added he, leading the children from a miniature hill, up and down the sides of which they had been racing.

"There!" said Mr. Graham, just as they passed the last house of a picturesque village, "do you see that beautiful thatched cottage, Herbert, with a veranda running all round it, and its latticed windows almost hidden with roses?"

"Yes," said Herbert; "and a sweet place it is. Pray is that Mr. Howard's?"

“It is; and if you admire it at this distance, I am sure you will much more on a nearer view.”

Charles and Elizabeth were in ecstasies at the place, and at the kind welcome which they received from Mr. and Mrs. Howard. After having partaken of some refreshments, they ran into the garden, with full permission to explore every part of it.

“Did you ever see such a delightful place, Charlie?” began Elizabeth; “do let us come first of all down this winding path, all arched over from one end to the other with ivy, and honeysuckle, and clematis, and passion-flower, and many things which I do not know the name of. Oh! how cool and pleasant the shade is!”

“Well, really!” said Charles, “I never ex-

pected to find anything like this ; but come on, Bessie, for I caught a glimpse of something like a ruined tower at the end. And so it is too ; take care how you come up this broken-down staircase : I wonder where it leads to."

"To the roof, most likely," said Elizabeth ; "where the wall-flowers and snap-dragons are growing. Yes, here we are, you see ; what a nice view of the house ! and there is cousin Herbert standing by the glass-door ; I wish he would look this way." — "And now," said Charles, "as we have seen all that is to be seen, let us go quite to the farthest end of the garden, and try to lose our way."

Away they therefore wandered, peeping into many a rustic arbour, or fantastic summer-house, built in the fashion of the Chinese, until their

farther progress was impeded by a little tinkling brook.

“Let us try and find out where this rises,” said Charles, darting among the bushes which clothed its banks; “who knows but we may make some wonderful discoveries; mind you do not tear your frock, Bessie. I am glad to see we are coming to more open ground.”

“So am I,” said Elizabeth; “it is uncomfortable enough here; my feet are covered with little burs, which prick me very disagreeably.”

“Well, we will sit down here,” said Charles, “and you can pick them off, and straighten your bonnet, for it is all manner of shapes. Look! look!” continued he, starting to his feet, “I am sure I saw a large snake creeping along on the opposite bank; now it has hidden itself behind

the willow-herb : I must get over the stream and look for it. Do not be frightened, Bessie, I will take care it does not bite me."

"Wait quietly here a little while," said Elizabeth in a whisper, "and perhaps we shall see it again ; it will be quite near enough, I dare say. But how could you tell it was a snake ? did you ever see one before ?"

"No," said Charles ; "but they are known easily enough ; in the shape of a worm, you know, only about a yard long. I shall lose another sight of him altogether if I remain here ; and I can get across by throwing a few of these stones into a heap in the water."—"Pray take care what you are about," said Elizabeth. "I am quite safe now, you see," said Charles, creeping softly about in search of the snake.

“Here it comes ! here it comes !” cried Elizabeth ; “ it is wriggling its long body towards the water. Do you see it ?”

“ Oh, yes, very plainly, pretty creature : look at the two long rows of black spots, from the head to the tail, and the yellow marks round its neck like a collar. What a singular-shaped head it has, though ; so flat on the top, and rounded at the mouth.”

“ I cannot imagine,” said Elizabeth, “ how you can admire it : but you seem to like even frogs and toads, which I think not at all pretty. Do you know what snakes live upon ?”

“ No, I do not, but I dare say Mamma can tell us. There ! now, the noise of my foot on these loose stones has frightened him, and he is going into a hole in the bank : does he not move cleverly ?”

“Pretty well,” said Elizabeth; “but how much longer are we going to stay here?”

“We will go directly, if you like,” answered her brother, “for I have no wish to stay, now that the snake is out of sight. I think I may write a description of him in my Book of Discoveries; do not you?”—“Yes, to be sure, for you had never seen one before; and you found him out gliding through the long grass. Hark! Charlie, what is that tapping noise, which I hear every now and then?”

Charles placed himself in a listening posture for a few minutes, and then said, “I think it must be a woodman at work amongst those high trees; let us go and see. How dark and shady this wood is! Tread softly now, Bessie, and I hope I shall make another discovery, for there is

no woodman near, and the tapping is almost close to us. Hark !”

As Charles finished speaking, he led his sister beneath the wide-spreading branches of a once majestic elm ; but its beauty was now going to decay, and its massy trunk appeared crumbling and hollow.

After silently examining every part, Charles, with a joyful smile, pointed to a bird of considerable size, who was ascending the stem of the tree in a spiral direction ; and by striking the bark almost incessantly with his long, hard beak, caused the noise which had attracted Elizabeth’s attention.

“ What can he be doing ?” said Charles ; “ I wish some one were here to tell us his name, and all about him.”

“What do you want to know, Charlie?” said a well-known voice behind them; “it is said, ‘think of a person, and he will appear.’ I hope it was for me you were wishing.”

“Oh! cousin Herbert,” said Elizabeth, “how you made me jump! I had no idea any one was near us.”

“I am very glad you are come,” said Charles; “but if we make such a noise, we shall frighten away the very thing I wanted you for. Look up, and you will see a bird running along on the under side of that branch, with his head downwards, like a fly: and now listen, he has begun to tap again.”

“Oh! you clever child to find him out,” said Herbert; “he is a *Green Woodpecker*, and a



great favourite of mine ; though sometimes his cry sounds very dismally through the woods, especially that which he utters on the approach of rain : at other times it resembles a loud burst of laughter often repeated.”

“ How much I should like to hear *that*,” said Charles. “ But why does he strike the bark in that manner, if you please ?”

“In order to arouse, and drive out of their concealment, the swarms of insects which infest the trunks of trees, decayed ones in particular; these are the food on which the Woodpecker subsists, and his beak and tongue are perfectly adapted for procuring it; the former being extremely hard and sharp at the point; and the latter very long, and tipped with a bony substance, to enable him to dart it into the holes after his prey.

“The Woodpecker’s nest is excavated in the trunk of a tree, running in a sloping direction for several inches, and then straight down for ten or twelve more. The opening is but just large enough to admit the bird; but it is roomy and capacious within, and frequently smoothly polished. At the bottom of the cavity, from four

to six pure white eggs are placed, generally on the bare wood, though now and then a softer bed of moss or wool is prepared. The young birds may be seen scrambling about on the tree, which contains their home, long before they are able to fly.

“The Woodpeckers abound in great numbers and variety in the American forests, where, however, they have many enemies: among the most deadly of which is a black snake, who frequently glides up the tree, enters the Woodpecker’s quiet abode, and devours the eggs or the helpless young, in spite of the cries and flutterings of the parent birds. If the empty nest be large enough, this destructive creature will coil himself up in it, and remain there at ease for several days. The gentleman

who relates this, says, that he has known adventurous school-boys, who, having climbed with great danger to the Woodpecker's hole, for the purpose of robbing it, have grasped what they thought to be the tender young ; when lo ! to their horror, they drew forth a hideous snake. In one of these instances, the boy's fright was so great, that he, with the snake, fell to the ground ; and a broken bone and long confinement completely cured him of his cruelty in robbing birds' nests."

"How dreadful !" said Charles ; "I do not wonder at his being so frightened."

"The same American Naturalist," continued Herbert, "once captured a Woodpecker, which was slightly wounded in the wing. Its loud and piteous note on being caught was most distress-

ing, and so terrified the gentleman's horse, as to render it almost unmanageable. As he carried the bird through the town to the inn, its affecting cry, (very similar to that of a young child,) surprised every one; and many women ran to their doors in alarm, to see what was the matter.

“When he arrived at the inn, the landlord and a number of persons who stood near, seemed equally alarmed at what they heard; and when the gentleman jocosely asked if they had accommodation for him and his baby, they stared in still greater astonishment: at length, after diverting himself at their expense for several minutes, he drew forth his captive Woodpecker, and a hearty laugh went round.

“On returning to the room where he had

confined his prisoner, while he went to see after his horse, he set up the same distressing shout, which now seemed to proceed from grief, at his attempt to escape having been discovered. He had actually broken away a large piece of plaster from the ceiling, and probably, in another hour would have been at liberty. He was then tied securely by the leg, while his master procured him some food: but still he was not idle; for on the gentleman's return, he had the mortification to find that he had almost ruined the mahogany table, to which he was fastened, and on which he had expended his rage."

"Poor thing!" said Charlie; "I hope the gentleman let him have his liberty after that."
"No, I am sorry to say he did not, though his

noble and untameable spirit frequently tempted him to do so. The Woodpecker refused all food, and died at the end of three days."

"Well, that was a pity," said Charles. "Was he of the same kind as the one we have just seen?" — "No; he was an *Ivory-billed* Woodpecker; one of the strongest of the race: his bill is as white, and tougher, if not harder, than ivory."

"Do you know, cousin Herbert," said Elizabeth, who had long been waiting for an opportunity to speak, "that this morning Charlie found a long brown snake, spotted with black."

"You don't say so!" replied Herbert; "you quite astonish me. Tell me, Charlie, if this snake had any yellow marks on its neck."

“ Yes, oh yes ! that is quite right. We both want to know what snakes live upon ? ”

“ Frogs, and mice, and insects : it is a very harmless and gentle creature. Did you take it in your hand ? ”

“ No,” said Charles ; “ I was afraid it would bite if I went too near it.”

“ You need not be afraid of that another time, dear ; for it is quite gentle and easily tamed, often showing much fondness for its keeper.”

“ I wish I had known that,” said Charlie ; “ but I will remember it another time, when I will catch it if I can, and try to tame it.”

“ It is just three o'clock,” said Herbert ; “ so we must return as quickly as we can, lest we should keep dinner waiting.”

“My dear children,” said Mrs. Graham, as they entered the dining-room, “how heated you look ! I must not have you run wild in this manner any more to-day, or you will be quite overdone. You will find plenty of amusement in looking at Mr. Howard’s curiosities indoors.”

“I should think,” said Mr. Howard, “that they are acquainted with every hole and corner in my domain by this time.”

“Oh, sir,” said Elizabeth, “we have been so delighted with every thing, but particularly with a snake and a woodpecker, which we (at least Charlie) discovered on the banks of a little brook.”

“Indeed !” said Mr. Howard : “pray is Charles famous for discoveries ?”

“ Yes, very famous,” said Elizabeth ; “ and you cannot think what a nice book he is writing about them.”

“ Hush, hush !” said Charles, pulling her sleeve, while the colour rose to her temples.

Elizabeth was always eloquent when her brother was the theme ; and there is no telling how much longer she might have chattered on, if she had not received an admonitory look from her Mamma, reminding her that little girls should not talk much at meal times.



PTIMWAGE

See Chap. XVI.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE HUMMING-BIRDS.

WHEN the party retired to the drawing-room, Charles immediately led his sister to a large case of beautiful foreign birds, principally humming-birds, whose dazzling plumage struck the children with astonishment and admiration: they thought they had never seen such brilliant colours before.

“Look at this beautiful little nest,” said Charles, “containing two eggs about the size of peas: does not this bird sitting by it look as if it were alive?”

“Yes,” said Elizabeth: “and here is her mate, I suppose, dipping his long bill into a flower.”

“Do you know why he does that?” said Mr. Howard.—“No,” said Charles; “will you be so kind as to tell us?”—“To extract the *nectar*, or honey, which is his food. These lovely little creatures received their name from a humming sound, caused by the rapid motion of their wings in flight. As they flit from flower to flower beneath the bright sun, they appear to be clothed in gems and gold, and almost dazzle the eye with their brilliancy.”

“Do they sing, if you please?” asked Charles.

“No; they merely utter a short cry while on the wing, which is not very musical.”

“Look at this snow-white bird, Charlie,” said Elizabeth; “I wonder what it is.”

“That is a *Campanero*, my dear,” said Mr. Howard ; “he is a native of South America, as well as the Humming-bird. His note is a very singular one, resembling the solemn tolling of a bell repeated every few minutes, and which may be heard at the distance of three miles. No sound or song from any of the dwellers in the dark forests causes such astonishment as the toll of the *Campanero*. But here is a book, which I think will interest you ; it is full of paintings of foreign birds ; and I dare say you can find the representation of several that are in this case.”

The children were much amused with the book, and had only just finished its examination, when tea was brought in ; almost immediately after which they prepared for their departure.

As Charles and Elizabeth bade adieu to Mr.

and Mrs. Howard, they were each presented with a small packet, neatly directed, with an injunction that they were not to be opened until their arrival at home. "Oh! Charlie," said Elizabeth, as they drove off, "I am so impatient to see what mine contains, I do not know how to wait."

"Stay, dear Bessie," said he; "you really must not peep like that. Why! you have torn the paper. Let me ask Mamma to take care of it."

"Give it to me, my dear," said Herbert; "I see your little fingers itch to pull off the string. See, how patiently Charlie waits: he looks so serious; I wonder what he is thinking about."

"I was thinking," said he, "of all the beautiful things which there are in the world, and which I am sure ought to make us happy; and I

wondered how any one could help loving God, who made them all."

"My dear child," said Herbert, putting his arm affectionately round him, "it is indeed sad to think that so many intelligent beings, who have the power of seeing and admiring the amazing works of the Creator, should yet remain unmindful of Him, and insensible to His love; when, if they were so disposed, they might learn of His power and goodness from every thing around them; from the lofty mountains, and the mighty ocean, to the minutest plant and insect. Shall I repeat to you a beautiful hymn, which I have often heard a dear little nephew sing?

'There's not a leaf within the bower;
There's not a bird upon the tree;
There's not a dew-drop on the flower,
But bears the impress, Lord! of thee.

Thy hand the varied leaf design'd,
And gave the bird its thrilling tone ;
Thy power the dew-drops' tints combin'd,
Till like a diamond's blaze they shone.

Yes, dew-drops, leaves, and buds, and all,
The smallest like the greatest things ;
The sea's vast space, the earth's wide ball,
Alike proclaim Thee King of Kings.

But man alone to bounteous Heaven
Thanksgiving's conscious strains can raise ;
To favour'd man alone 'tis given
To join the angelic choir in praise.' "

" And now," said Elizabeth, as they arrived at the well-known house, and even before the door was opened, " nothing can prevent my looking at my present : please, cousin Herbert, give it to me."

" When we are in the parlour. There, now you may take it ; let me cut the string for you."

Elizabeth was delighted with its contents, consisting of an elegant French box, furnished with scissors, thimble, bodkin-case, &c. all of silver. Charles gave an admiring glance at it, before he proceeded to examine his own gift, which pleased him almost beyond expression. Beneath a small glass shade was a splendid Humming-bird, gleaming with green and gold: it was perched on a mossy spray, with its wings spread as if in the act of taking flight. "Look here," said Elizabeth; "here is something which you have not seen, Charlie; I think it is a letter."

"No," said Charles, "it is a piece of poetry: will you read it, please, cousin Herbert; the writing is so difficult."

"Certainly, dear; it is part of a piece on the Humming-bird, by Mary Howitt.

‘ The humming-bird !—the humming-bird,
So fairy-like and bright ;
It lives among the sunny flowers,
A creature of delight !

‘ In the radiant islands of the East,
Where fragrant spices grow,
A thousand, thousand humming-birds
Are glancing to and fro.

‘ Like living fires they flit about,
Scarce larger than a bee,
Among the dusk palmetto leaves,
And through the fan-palm tree.

‘ And in the wild and verdant woods,
Where stately moras tower,—
Where hangs from branching tree to tree,
The scarlet passion-flower :

* * * *

‘ There builds her nest the humming-bird
Within the ancient wood—
Her nest of silky cotton down,
And rears her tiny brood.

‘ She hangs it to a slender twig,
Where waves it light and free,
As the *Campanero* tolls his song,
And rocks the mighty tree.

‘ All crimson is her shining breast,
Like to the red, red rose ;
Her wing the changeful green and blue,
That the neck of the peacock shows.

‘ Thou happy, happy humming-bird,
No winter round thee lowers ;
Thou never saw’st a leafless tree,
Nor land without sweet flowers.

* * * * *

‘Thou little shining creature,
God saved thee from the flood,
With eagle of the mountain land,
And tiger of the wood !

‘Who cared to save the elephant,
He, also, cared for thee,
And gave those broad lands for thy home,
Where grows the cedar-tree !’ ”

CHAPTER XVII.

THE CONCLUSION.

“WELL ! my dears,” said Herbert, as he met Charles and Elizabeth in the garden, at an early hour on the morning of his departure ; “so this is the last ramble I can take with you for some time to come, at least ; but we shall have very many pleasant hours to think about when we are separated. Why, Bessie ! I did not mean to call forth those bright tears ; dry them up quickly, there’s a good girl, for it grieves me to see them.”

“She did not intend to grieve you, dear cousin Herbert,” said Charles; “but we are both so sorry you are going away; every place will seem so dull without you.”

“No, Charlie,” replied Herbert, “not while your dear Papa and Mamma are here; they are always cheerful. But I will tell you of a plan; whenever you are inclined to feel dull, set about some useful or amusing employment; and instead of dwelling on present troubles, picture to yourself a happy future.”

“Yes,” said Elizabeth, “that is what I shall do. I shall plan all about your next visit, which, you must remember, is to be before long: and instead of guessing whether you will be kind or cross, and short or tall, as I did when first we heard you were coming; I shall think of all the

pretty places which we must take you to see, and of the things I want to talk to you about."

"I intend for the future," said Charles, "to keep my garden in excellent order, that it may be fit for you to see at any time."

"It is a good way," said Herbert, "to be always prepared; for very likely I shall pop in upon you, quite unawares, some of these days."

"I am afraid it is going to be a wet day," said Charles, looking up at the gathering clouds; "there is scarcely any blue sky to be seen, and no bright sunshine. Ah! there, I felt a drop of rain on my face."

"What a bad job!" said Herbert; "I dislike travelling when every thing is dripping with wet. But let us come in now, for it is high

time we were at breakfast, and Mamma is already at her post at the table."

The parting moment came at last ; and though Herbert's own feelings were none of the most agreeable, he managed to keep up the spirits of the party pretty well. Even Elizabeth could not help smiling through her tears, as she gave him a half cheerful, half melancholy nod, when the post-chaise rattled away from the door.

Having watched till it was out of sight, the children returned silently to the school-room, to prepare their lessons ; each determining to give their whole minds to their duty, knowing that this would afford their Mamma true pleasure.

Day after day passed in the same happy routine ; on each succeeding one gaining new

stores of information, and giving and receiving happiness.

And here we must bid adieu to our little hero Charles, and his sister, as it is not our intention to write a history of their lives ; but merely to let other little boys and girls learn from their example, to search out the innumerable objects of interest within their reach, and to tell them what a pure delight rewards those who study the beauteous works of Nature's God. His works fill the whole world : the air, the earth, and the wide waters, are full of life ; and we must acknowledge, that even the smallest thing that breathes, is curiously and wonderfully made ; and we are well assured that nothing has ever been created in vain.

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